MEMOIR OF ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

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ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER

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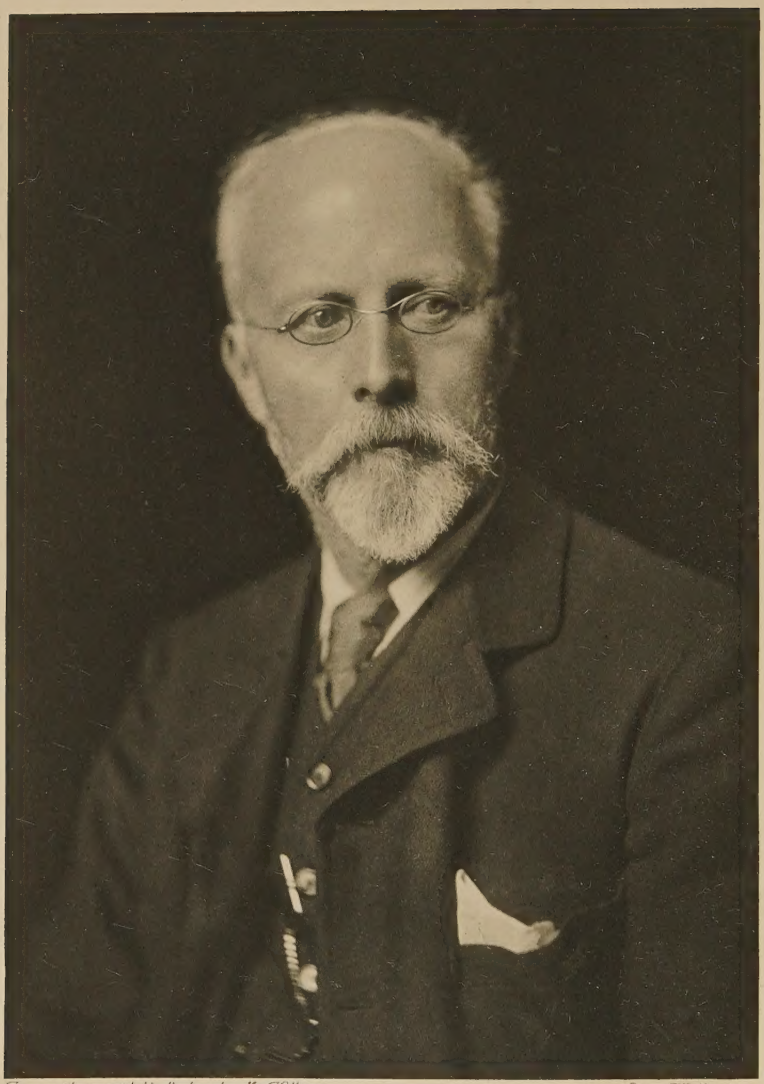

From a photograph kindly lent by Mr Hollyer *Emery Walker ph.sc.*

A. J. Butler

PRESENTATION COPY

MEMOIR

OF

ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER

BY

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

KING EDWARD VII PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

WITH PORTRAITS

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1917

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PRESENTATION COPY

PREFACE

I WAS correcting the last proofs of this Memoir, and had almost reached the moment of marking them "for press," when news came that the friend was dead to whom they should have been posted—Mr. Reginald Smith, K.C., head of the publishing house of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.

The book, up to then, had required no Preface. All who helped us to write it helped in affection for Butler's memory; the mere mention of their names, as they occur in the following pages, carries its implication of gratitude; and the adviser who stood behind us would have deprecated being thanked in a Preface.

It is now permissible to say that Reginald Smith, as an old friend of Butler's, was a friend to this Memoir from the beginning: and worth while, perhaps, to record also that he had found a deep and serious pleasure of late, as Butler's correspondence revealed a strong guiding principle

of life, in recognising it and comparing it with his own. I send off these pages with the thought that, however and wherever another life shall renew it, I have been privileged in this world by the friendship and counsel of those two men.

ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH.

New Year's Day,
1917.

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PORTRAITS

ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER . . *Frontispiece*
From a photograph by Frederick Hollyer

AT CLOVELLY, 1870 . . . *Facing page* 78

MEMOIR OF ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE—CHILDHOOD—BRADFIELD

1844–1857

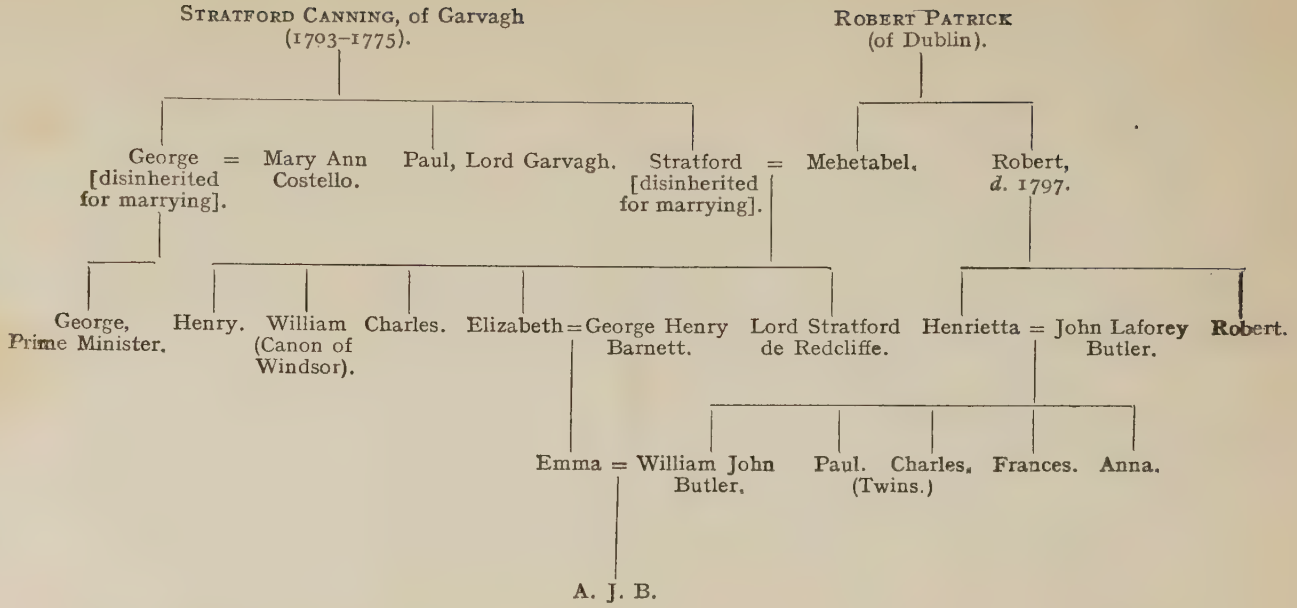
ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER was born on the 21st of June, 1844, at Putney; the eldest child of the Reverend William John Butler—then curate of Puttenham, near Guildford, afterwards successively Vicar of Wantage, Canon of Worcester, and Dean of Lincoln—and his wife Emma, daughter of George Henry Barnett, banker, of Glympton Park, Woodstock.

A word must be said at the outset upon this parentage: for in it were united two strong characters which, though apparently diverse in their strength, drew no little of it from a common strain of ancestry, and as male and female wonderfully complemented, balanced, sustained one another

until for both of them, grown old, death closed in a week the long account of mutual service.

The Butlers came originally from Pembrokeshire. But William Butler's mother was of Irish descent; daughter of a Captain Robert Patrick whose sister Mehetabel—an Irish beauty—had been captured and run off with by Stratford Canning, uncle of George Canning the statesman. The head of the Cannings disapproved of the match and abjured Stratford; who died and left a young family disinherited of all save good looks, personal charm, and force of character—inalienable gifts which their mother bestowed and courageously improved. Of the children, Stratford grew up to be the greatest British diplomatist of his century, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe; William to attain a canonry of Windsor; Charles to be aide-de-camp to the Duke of Wellington and perish at Waterloo; Elizabeth to marry the banker George Barnett (above mentioned) and bear a daughter, Emma, who married William Butler.

To bring this Canning-Patrick connection to a point in the birth of Arthur Butler—his paternal great-grandfather and maternal great-grandmother were brother and sister.


Stratford Canning, of Garvagh
(1703–1775).
Robert Patrick
(of Dublin).
George
[disinherited
for marrying].
Mary Ann
Costello.
Paul, Lord Garvagh.
Stratford
[disinherited
for marrying].
Mehetabel.
Robert,
d. 1797.
George,
Prime Minister.
Henry.
William
(Canon of
Windsor).
Charles.
Elizabeth
George Henry
Barnett.
Lord Stratford
de Redcliffe.
Henrietta
John Laforey
Butler.
Robert.
Emma
William John
Butler.
Paul.
(Twins.)
Charles.
Frances.
Anna.
A. J. B.

William Butler, educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge, had, on leaving his University, made acquaintance with John Keble, Manning, Wilberforce, Charles Marriott and others of the Oxford Movement, and had taken from their teaching the firm trend of his life. While mistrustful of Ritualism as inexpedient and provocative, a superfluous challenge of English Protestant prejudice (ever apt to wax hottest over inessential forms), to the central purpose of restoring the Church's authority and discipline in this land he set his face like a flint. The loss of these had been nobly lamented long ago, in a passage of Jeremy Taylor's *Polemical Discourses :*

I shall only crave leave that I may remember Jerusalem, and call to mind the pleasure of the temple, the order of her services, the beauty of her buildings, the sweetness of her songs, the decency of her ministrations, the assiduity and economy of her Priests and Levites, the daily sacrifice, and that eternal fire of devotion that went not out by day nor by night. These were the pleasures of our peace ; and there is a remanent felicity in the very memory of those

spiritual delights which we then enjoyed as antepasts of Heaven and consignations to an immortality of joys. *And it may be so again when it shall please God,* Who hath the heart of all princes in His hand and turneth them as the rivers of waters ; and when men will consider the invaluable loss that is consequent, and the danger of sin that is appendant, to the destroying of such forms of discipline and devotion in which God was purely worshipped, and this Church was edified, and the people instructed to great degrees of piety, knowledge and devotion.

That which Bishop Taylor had been content to mourn, Butler was determined to revive so far as one man might in his own sphere of activity. That sphere he found in June 1846 (the child Arthur being then just two years old) when—through the offices of his wife's uncle, William Canning the Canon—the Dean and Chapter of Windsor offered him the living of Wantage.

Wantage, an ancient market town on the northern edge of the Berkshire Downs, famous as the birthplace of two great Englishmen, King Alfred and Bishop Butler, was known to enjoy a severe but healthy climate along with an evil

reputation, summarised in the nickname "Black Wantage." Apart from the weekly corn-market attended by farmers from the Vale of the White Horse, rope-making (on the decline) and a new iron foundry furnished its staple industries. It had no resident gentry, and missed alike the amenities of town and of country life. It possessed, indeed, a stately church, in lamentable disrepair ; with a Latin school and a dame school (both in the churchyard). Thirty-six children attended the dame school, out of a population of 3282. For a century and a half the benefice had been held by non-resident vicars, who placed a curate in the vicarage at a petty stipend. The last of this line of curates, when William Butler visited the church to prospect, preached a sermon "drier than hay. Not a word of sense in it. I only wonder so many people can sit through such discourses. . . . Lengthy too. *This leads me to consider* . . . and all that."

The new Vicar, who was to change "all that" and much besides, arrived in the beginning of 1847 and installed his family in the thatched parsonage (supposed to date from the sixteenth century). At

first his parishioners applauded his energy ; for he threw himself with zest into municipal affairs, attending all meetings of town governors and commissioners, pressing for a drainage system (badly needed) and taking an active part in getting the town lighted with gas. Wantage, says an anonymous writer in the *Bristol Times,* at the close of his first year,

> though it has two inns, three tailors and drapers, one policeman, a brace of watchmen, and gas lamps, is little better than streets of farmhouses confronting each other, with flocks and herds feeding out in the rear. . . . While strolling about on Saturday evening, I found the church door open, and entered. There were some men at work repairing and restoring the chancel. . . . The new clergyman is of the new school—zealous, anxious, ever in his work. He is evidently one of the race of clergymen who have of late years sprung up to replace the old high-and-dry denomination, and competes in energy and zeal with the evangelical order—one of a class who emerge from Oxford and Cambridge with ideas already formed of pastoral duty, with plans prepared and purposes fixed to carry them out with a kind of Christian chivalry. . . .

Wantage has been one of those places which have commonly been considered an appanage to some cathedral stall, or a fat gift for some favoured pluralist, who thought it no sin, as Lord Eldon said, *to shear the sheep he did not feed.* The Dean of St. George's Chapel at Windsor was the last of the favoured few to whom Wantage fell. Twice a year he arrived with a carpet bag at the Bear Inn, received his tithes, and returned, without leaving either his carpet bag or his blessing behind him. After such a pastor any ordinary conscientious clergyman must have been a change for the better; and the present being more than commonly painstaking, the consequences of increased zeal began to be gradually seen in increased congregations; pew-doors, the latches of which had rusted in their staples, were gradually opened; seats, from which the moths had not been disturbed for years, began to fill . . . and on the Sunday I was there the edifice was completely filled with smock-frocks and broadcloth. I liked the sermon, because I thought it an original one: none of those firstly, secondly, and thirdly compilations.

For the deeds by which he transformed the parish, the exemplary work for which the name of "Butler of Wantage" went abroad on men's lips; how he founded the famous Wantage Sisterhood of

St. Mary, parent of some thirty or forty societies all over England; how he restored the parish church; how he wrought for the children's education until, when he came to lay down his charge, the dame school in the churchyard with its thirty-six scholars had made way for buildings in which were taught more than 750, varying in age from three to nineteen or twenty; for the remarkable succession of curates he inspired, trained, sent forth—for the full story, in short, the reader is referred to the *Life and Letters of William John Butler,* published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. in 1898.

But much of this work met with fierce—even unusually fierce—opposition; the fiercer perhaps because the Vicar, at all events in these early days of his incumbency, was not a man amenable to compromise. They were days of the "Gorham Judgment," of public rage against "Puseyism" and "Puseyites," of Cardinal Wiseman's "Papal aggression"; and several secessions from the Sisterhood to the Church of Rome lent excuse to men who suspected this rigid priest for a sort of Papist in disguise even while he was straining every nerve to keep men and women of troubled

conscience true to the Church of their fathers. The storm broke at a vestry meeting which refused him leave to apply for a faculty to restore the parish church. The Vicar, setting his face like a flint, became highly unpopular. Insulting inscriptions were chalked upon the walls, and the Sisters used to go out late at night to wash them off. He would say grimly that he expected to be hanged on one of the lamp-posts with which he had helped to provide the town.

Throughout these troubles Mrs. Butler never faltered in her help, which she gave in the most practical way. Outside the house the Vicar was a man of many affairs, organising, commanding, consulted on a hundred details, controlling all to a purpose. Of the internal economies of the vicarage he knew as little as his children did, or less. Mrs. Butler kept all accounts, domestic and parochial, and the domestic purse, setting him absolutely free from financial worries. He used to say that since his marriage he had only drawn one cheque, which was returned with the comment, "Signature not known." Says the *Life and Letters :*

She had resolved at the outset never to be a hindrance to him in his clerical duties, and so through the long years of toil at Wantage she had been content to lead a self-denying life ; to forgo many of the pleasant refreshments which sometimes sweeten the life of a hard-working clergyman's wife ; to see but little of him during the day when he was busy in the schools and in the parish, or in the evening when he would be holding classes. And in this retired life not many knew what reason her husband had to be proud of the intellectual powers which she never sought to display.

A glimpse of the Vicar in the midst of these activities may be given from a chapter of reminiscences contributed by one of the most brilliant of his curates, the Rev. V. S. Stuckey Coles. It belongs, in fact, to a period considerably later than that with which we are dealing ; but few lives ran on lines more steadily continuous than did those of one Wantage household :

Early rising never laid aside is always impressive to lads, to whom it is always difficult, and the wonderful arrangements of the first hours of the Vicar's day were more than surprising. Before ten-o'clock matins he had said his prayers, often been at the altar either of the home or of the parish

church, taken a class of pupil teachers, said Terce with his own household, and done a good deal towards dealing with the day's letters. I can hardly explain how it was, but he was the only man whom I remember to have said the offices as quickly as he did without irreverence. . . .

We met every day in the Vicar's study at one o'clock, and sometimes waited for him, as his work at the Home was growing and kept him longer than he wished. He would rush in, talk to us while he washed his hands, arrange a number of details, lay his finger on some of our weak points, make a joke or two, tell us news (which he always seemed to find time to get at), and finally, as I have already said, pass with unfeigned reverence but unabated energy into the Oratory for Sext. After dinner there was another conference and Nones. . . .

Amid all this one discovers few references to the subject of this Memoir beyond a chance word or two in his father's letters to Keble: "A. is growing a fat, strong boy." "A.'s hair is as curly as ever." As Thucydides said of the early tribes of Hellas, so far as my research has gone I surmise that he did nothing of importance in one way or another. A sister, Frances Charlotte ("Fanny"), had been born before the move to Wantage: other children

came to the nursery then and kept Mrs. Butler busy—Grace Harriet, b. 1847; William George, b. 1849; Edith Emma, b. 1851; Mary Avice, b. 1855. From various casually dropped hints in the family correspondence one gathers that from the first the child had a great capacity for brotherly love (as in later years for friendship), and the very earliest letters seem to declare to me a strength of filial affection, almost of adoration, to which no man of my acquaintance was ever more constant to the end of his days. In June 1849 he, with his sisters Fanny and Grace (aged four and two), is away from home on a visit to his grandfather Barnett at Glympton Park; their devoted aunt, Miss Barnett, looking after the pair. His father writes him a birthday letter, the anxious love of which reveals itself in the script, carefully written in print that the child may read it easily. But—after the fatal way of fathers in the last century—the words merely improve the occasion: "Dearest Boy, your birthday brings a great many thoughts into Mammy's mind and into mine. First we think how good God has been to us in giving you, whom we love very much, into our hands. . . . Your

dear Mammy and I wish to save you, as much as we can, from being unhappy when you grow up, and this is the reason why we tell you always and sometimes punish you when you do wrong now," etc. *O cæca pectora patrum!* The aunt writes home and, reporting everything, reports for us incidentally how much wiser is the heart of a child. A. awakes in a strange bed, jumps out, and is actually some way down the passage to kiss his mother good-morning before he recollects that she is not here. "I did not think," goes on the fond writer, "a year could make such a difference in Ar.'s steadiness. . . . I can't but think in a few more months *he will have learnt to learn*, and then nearly all difficulty we have will be over. His countenance is more lovely than ever. He often sits by me for an hour when I read some American travels which amuse him, and his face, as he looks up at me to make a remark or ask a question, is the sweetest and most intelligent I *ever* saw." His uncle, the Canon, pronounces him "a nice fellow—very nice fellow—very like George Canning."

He learns to ride, at any rate, and takes a great

interest in the ponds by the road ; wants to know if clergymen are allowed to baptize in ponds and rivers ; and announces that when he grows up he means to carry a Prayer Book in his pocket, so that meeting with a heathen he may be ready to baptize him straight away. He does his Latin lesson well, but the letters in his copy are too close together, and having perused a book of Chemistry, he thinks they must be suffering from " affinity."

There are worse afflictions than the wrong-headedness of parishioners. In the spring of 1851 the family at Wantage suffered its first heavy sorrow in the death of " Fanny," an event which seems to have touched her six-year-old brother less with grief than with a kind of holy awe. Miss Barnett, ever helpful, is at the Vicarage, of course. She writes :

The sweet child had snowdrops in her hand, and violets and primroses, and the tiny white everlasting all around her. She looked very lovely, though utterly unlike life. Arthur, after the first time—when, as he expressed it, he " felt shy "—delighted in going to look at her and kiss her, not shrinking even from the cold. . . . He has been so very quiet and gentle both to Emma [his mother]

and to me, and helping to keep the little ones quiet. His one great wish was to be close to Fanny to the last, and he had his wish : for when the school children were ranged on each side of the gravel walk, and the choristers in their surplices were ready to carry the little coffin on the bier covered with a white pall, Mr. Vincent called for Arthur, and he was allowed to walk behind the bier and, as he thought, to help to carry it ; and then, while it was resting before the altar and the choristers had taken their places in the stalls, still Arthur stood motionless at the head of the coffin, quite alone, and looking with his sweet grave reverent face a meet chief-mourner for such an innocent. It was the most touching sight I ever gazed on, and one of the most beautiful.

Miss Barnett's words, " I can't but think in a few more months he will have learnt to learn" seems to take some illumination from the next letter (of June 1852). Among Mrs. Butler's domestic duties that of teaching the children was not the least arduous. She even prepared Arthur's Latin lesson with him before it went up to his father. The boy was now eight, and his parents hoped he might win an entrance scholarship at Bradfield College (St. Andrew's) not far away : at least, the father

judged it possible. The mother was less sanguine. She writes to Miss Barnett :

My present phase of persuasion is that Ar. will neither obtain this nor any other scholarship or scholastic or collegiate distinction. . . . He never struggles as I remember *always* doing for my top masters : and really and truly I had no vanity in my early days to egg me on. It was simply that the pain of not doing well at lessons was so enormous that I could not but buy it off by any amount of previous trouble and exertion.

Is it not strange that woman, who usually learns thus and for this kind of approbation, will never—though she be as wise in other matters as Mrs. Butler—understand that men as a rule do not ? The males of our kind, even the very young, work at a job because *it* interests them ; which, after all, is no bad reason.

I think we may fairly set down much of the gloom of these remarks to Mrs. Butler's fear of raising hopes that might be disappointed : yet it remains true that Arthur had a way throughout life of learning what he liked.

On August 16th, father, mother, and son took

carriage and drove to Bradfield across the Downs ; a journey "which implies a certain amount of losing of way, and much grand sight of 'effects' and breathing of pure air." There were hills to be walked, and the party did not reach the College until about seven o'clock, when everyone had gone in to dinner, "which feast we joined without toilette." They found four other candidates gathered for the ordeal, of ages ranging from ten-and-a-half to twelve-and-a-half : "therefore," writes the anxious mother, "unless he does *wonders*, the examiners will of course elect the elder ones." Two days later, back again at Wantage, she announced the result :

I have greatly wished for carrier pigeons or private electric telegraph since yesterday morning. So great and overwhelming a surprise I never had as when W. came into the room at Bradfield when I was finishing the Pack, and said, "Our Arthur has got it !" From all we could gather the day before from our cross-examination of Arthur, we felt more than ever sure that he would not be elected. He could recall so few of the questions and answers that we judged he had hardly been examined at all, and that from his being so much

younger than the others they had left him pretty nearly alone. . . . But it was all a curious part of the *unconsciousness* of his mind. When once the business was over, he thought no more of it. . . . The Holy Communion was celebrated after the 8.30 service, the various parents forming the congregation. Afterwards the two masters, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Marriott, laid their heads together and after deliberation the fathers were summoned. W. heard Arthur's name read out, but thought it was in a *list of candidates*, so utterly surprised was he. . . . Then the people called Arthur, who was quietly reading or playing. . . . Dearest child! how he rushed to tell me! . . .

He is much more occupied with his new puppy's charms to-day than he was with his scholarship yesterday.

But Arthur has already found time to send a line to his beloved Aunt:

My dear Lizzy,—I have only just come home from Bradfield. Pardon me for writing such a short letter to you, for there will be more good news on the other side. I will write another letter to-morrow.

Turn over quickly.

Your affectionate nephew and godson,

ARTHUR J. BUTLER,

Scholar of St. Andrew's College, Bradfield, Berkshire.

Answers of congratulation lie before me, from his aunt and grandfather (Mr. Barnett had a warm love for the boy, and believed in scholarship apart from 'scholarships'). They do not, however, differ much from most letters of aunts and grandfathers upon these happy occasions; and it may be thought that parents and relatives have already taken up room enough in this memoir. My excuse must be that Wantage was Arthur Butler's home until his marriage in 1875; that it was a somewhat remarkable one; that, above all, no one can understand him unless by understanding the ineradicable tincture he took from it or the fidelity with which every fibre in the grown man thrilled back to it.

"True to the kindred points of heaven and home"

says something eminently true of him, though it does not say all.

He remained at Bradfield until 1857. In the summer half after Easter of that year, by especial wish of his grandfather, he proceeded to Eton.

CHAPTER II

Eton

1857–1863

It is plain to me, as I read the family letters of this period, that Mr. and Mrs. Butler were inclined to be over-anxious about the boy on whom they had pinned so many hopes; that the parental care was a little too watchful, the hand of guidance a thought too officious to be entirely wise. Arthur was their eldest child; and I cannot avoid seeing that this unworldly pair started, as many worldly people start to be parents, on the set hope that their offspring would combine their own best qualities to advance upon their own attainments, be much like themselves—only better.

Certain letters from Dr. Sanderson, the boy's master at Bradfield, divine this excessive solici-

tude and most delicately admonish it. I must quote a passage or two which do honour to this good man's memory :

Oct. 5, 1852. . . . Your little boy is very well and happy. What you speak of, viz. his difficulty in fixing his thoughts promptly upon what is going on in class or elsewhere, we have noticed. He seems fond of following out a line of thought, and this often leads him quite away from present realities into *brown studies*. I do very much hope you will not be anxious at his not making any continued and regular progress in the *amount* of his knowledge at present. He wants rather *discipline* of mind than that it should be *stored*. . . . And at his age he requires bodily vigour to keep pace with the activity of his mind, and indeed rather for a time to outstrip it. . . . He is a good little fellow and a great favourite, and promises very well to be an excellent scholar and a good man. I can't tell you how jealous I am lest his mind be overtaxed. We will take care that he does not *waste* his time ; but he is very young and looks delicate, as you say.

Dec. 25, 1852.—You will have seen in Arthur all that you need hear. We none of us at Bradfield

hoped to see any *improvement* in him. His mind was not only so pure and simple, but sufficiently well stored also for his age, that we looked rather that he should be kept as he was than gain anything. That was my great anxiety, and I watched him closely. I am very thankful to think that his first contact with *his* world has not taken away that freshness of mind and open-heartedness which was so noticeable.

March 4, 1853.—I am always very anxious about him. . . . You know well the only great dread I have about him. He must not ripen too fast. There are two fears if he does—that his health will be fatally injured, or his brain will be weakened.

I find him a little dull in class this half-year; more so, certainly, than at the close of the last. This may be because there has been an interruption of some weeks. It also may be from his want of rest—entire rest—in the holidays. (I know you will forgive my writing what I from my heart believe to be important in his case, although you may think me wrong.) The object of all early education is to prepare a youth so that he shall be able to devote himself to whatever calling he follows with all his powers at their full vigour and completely cultivated. . . . For a boy of eighteen to know a certain amount of facts is not the end,

but that he should be *prepared* to give his attention wholly to his calling. His actual attained knowledge is mainly incidental, and only so far an end as it is implied in the true end. Now, if this is the case, I cannot but think it unwise to strain a boy's mind at a very early age and fill it with facts which other boys have not to receive till two or three years later. . . . I will be wholly responsible for this forbearing treatment being the best for him, and that with it he will make in the end the greater man. You will wonder at my saying that it was, to my mind, a great mistake setting him at Greek. . . . Can you find out from him what he feels about having been put into another seat in Church? I fancy he is vexed at it. I would not of course ask him for the world.

I have copied out these passages at length as well for their own sake—so redolent are they of gentle wisdom, so honourably (rescued from a private letter) they testify to this dead schoolmaster's conscience in his calling—as because they throw some light on the hopes and disappointments of the next few pages.

"His first contact with *his* world"—in that

phrase lies the secret. It is so difficult for parents, and especially for strong-minded parents, to realise that the child's world is not theirs, that it claims him, and that often what seems to them but languor and idleness is a stage under which the growing individual soul is forced, by delicacy and affection, to take cover, to maintain its strength, its independence, its inalienable right. In face of two strong parents, bent on shaping him, A. J. B. always delicately and reverentially, but always obstinately, preserved a soul of his own.

His sister, Mrs. Guinness ("Grace"), records that—

His school life, beginning at eight years old, took him away from home very early; but in his holidays we were always companions. He was very fond of trying chemical experiments, and many strange odours and compounds ensued.

We were accustomed to going to the daily Services, as a matter of course, and he always went once a day when at home, and was specially attached to certain Gregorian chants and hymns. From the time that he was nine years old he

always shared in the annual holiday with our parents—generally abroad; and he and I were allowed to go about alone in the towns, or for mountain walks.

We shall have more to say of these holiday tours by and by. Mrs. Guinness goes on:

I should not say that he was a studious boy; but he was always picking up odds and ends of information and repeating things he had by heart—from Arundines Cami and such like; full of ability but *not* of application, which worried my Father . . . who insisted on his working in the holidays, and kept him in his study to supervise this. . . . Part of the holidays were always spent with our grandfather, Mr. Barnett, either in London or at Glympton. He was very fond of Arthur, and used to read classics with him. Then our Aunt Lizzie quite worshipped A. J. B., and indulged him in every way. She also taught him before he went to Bradfield. But it was always attributed to his Mother's grounding him so well in Latin that he got the scholarship when he was eight. He rose quickly in the forms at Bradfield and was working with much older boys: so my Father decided to take him away and send him to Eton. At first it was intended he should go into

College: but he did not try to get a good place, and my Grandfather, as an old Oppidan, did not wish him to be a Colleger. So that was given up.

We have collected hints enough to supply a portrait of him as he first went up to Eton, the second "half" in 1857, a few weeks before his thirteenth birthday: a good-looking, fair boy, seemingly "younger than his years" and somewhat fragile (but this was illusory; for his frame, always lean and thorough-bred, hardened with manhood and grew capable of great endurance, as his mountaineering was to prove); home loving, devout, cherished in an atmosphere of care; but saved from priggishness by an open innocence and a nature equally open to take the world on trust, alert for experience, with a happy instinct of seeking it through friendship.

In his first letter from Eton he writes home to his mother:

You are quite right in calling this place "horrible"; for in spite of all the comforts it certainly is worse than I thought. The way the fellows

behave in Chapel is dreadful. They talk, laugh, and play all through service.

He is in a "Dame's House" at first (Mrs. de Rosen's) but afterwards boards with Dr. Balston, later with Mr. Dupuis, lastly with the Rev. Edmond Warre (subsequently Headmaster, 1884–1905, and now Provost of Eton). He starts by taking Remove and reports that "the Examination was not hard." He is "up to" Mr. Marriott—"whom I like very much: he explains things"—and at once attends, with the rest of the School, the funeral of the Duchess of Gloucester, last surviving daughter of George III.

We—that is about 300 boys—stood on the wall, and the rest in the road in front of the Chapel. . . . There were seventy-three carriage horses, altogether. The Duchess of Atholl came instead of the Queen, and yet her son, Tullibardine, did not wear a black cloth band round his hat as nearly all the other fellows did. Very likely you will see one round mine on Monday.

A week or two later he is expecting a visit—for the Fourth of June festivities—from his grand-

father and one of his aunts. "But," he writes to Aunt Lizzie, "if you meant that Grandpapa could breakfast in my room, I am afraid that is quite impracticable." (Grandparents, alas! unlike the sun in childhood, *can* come a whit too soon and bring too long a day.) "The boats start at 6.30 P.M., and lock-up is ten minutes after the fireworks. . . . You cannot imagine how I like Eton. I have got about ten plants; fuchsias, geraniums, verbenas and a white pink (a lily of the valley, too. I had another, but gave away the root). Tell Aunt Doddie that I shall have a glorious nosegay for her on the 4th. I am going to have lots of cuttings made, to take home. Do you take cuttings of fuchsias, or how do you plant them? . . . *P.S.*—I have spent 8*s.* 1*d.* on my flowers. There are men who sell them at the wall."

Thus, quickly, of course, the child surrenders to the charm of Eton—a surrender not incompatible, for a boy of Butler's quick gifts, with a certain degree of idleness.

The parents at home are watchful, and storm-signals begin to be hoisted in the correspondence.

But in the holidays—at home, whither his heart faithfully reverts, and during the August excursions abroad (which the family henceforward takes regularly)—he is the same child as ever, eager, affectionate, and unspoilt. I have before me a small pocket-book journal of the first of these foreign trips, taken in this first holiday of 1857—Dover to Calais, Lille, Liège, Aix la Chapelle, Cologne, the Rhine by steamboat, Basle, Geneva, Chamounix, the St. Bernard ("and saw the dogs. They have 5 : 4 males—2 not quite pure breed—and 1 female ; it had just pupped"). A great number of cathedrals appear to have been visited and—perhaps by consequence—a number of trains and steamers missed ; but the record is not otherwise remarkable. Between 1859 and his death (seven years later) the party sometimes included that famous scholar, James Riddell of Balliol, to whom A. J. B. became devoted. The "Professor" returned the boy's affection, and cherished a hope that in due course he might win a Balliol scholarship. Conscious or unconscious of this doom the little victim plays, enjoying him-

self thoroughly as he undergoes his first apprenticeship in mountaineering.

But back at Eton he is learning, among other things, how to idle ; and the inevitable storm comes heralded by a letter from his mathematical master, Mr. Brandreth. Mr. Brandreth has been invited to pay a visit to Wantage, to be "pumped" (it is pretty evident) concerning his pupil's progress. The good honest man shies at this—"the life one leads here, scarcely speaking to anybody but the boys and having no calls to any continuous mental effort, destroys one's relish of company." Moreover, he has nothing cheerful to report. He goes on :

Do not, however, think me unreasonably exacting, or suppose that I forget that thinking for an hour is fully as difficult as holding out a poker for that time—but I do think a boy of your son's age and capabilities ought to recognise that though rowing up to Monkey and Maidenhead is excellent in its place,[1] it should not be done till

[1] A. J. B. was never actually in the Boats at Eton, his parents demurring to the expense. But he came to Eton with some knowledge of the rudiments of rowing, learnt at Glympton in an old river-punt fitted with rowlocks ; and two House wins (with "Rowly" Melgund) proved that he could "stay" over a race. He rowed a respectable oar in the "Monarch" ; but took his thwart there by virtue of his position in the School.

he is sure that such boys as Fortescue and Puller minor do not sap up by themselves Trigonometry enough to beat him, or let little Puller, whom he beat by four to one *last* year in Algebra, come up within two marks of him *this*. I think he should remember a little more *animi imperio corporis servitio magis utimur : alterum nobis cum dîs, alterum cum belluis commune est.* . . . Excuse me if I use stronger language than the decent platitudes in which schoolmasters usually praise their pupils. I am really vexed and annoyed, and equally unwilling to accept either of these conclusions : (1) that the boy has been thoroughly idle [and] has found no difficulties, (2) that he has distrusted my will, (3) that he has distrusted my ability to help him over them.

This is bad ; but worse follows in a second letter from the agitated man :

July 26, 1861.—I wish you would hold me excused from coming to you next week. The fact is that the more I think of your boy the more disappointed I am, and I am sure I should find no pleasure in it. I think the education here not what it used to be : so much more is exacted by tutors and masters that boys hardly have the sense of their responsibility to work. They are

satisfied with satisfying their tutor, and do not think of satisfying themselves. Instead of getting what they can out of their tutors they leave their tutors to get what they can out of *them*. Perhaps I have gone to the other extreme. . . .

I daresay I shall recover my temper by next half : but at present I really must ask to be excused from running the risk of showing it in your own house.

The Vicar posts this letter to Arthur, and writes :

I am much disappointed by a letter which I received this morning from Mr. Brandreth. I fear that you have again done very much below your powers. If I am mistaken, you can let me know.

You will see that he—rightly, as I think, and on your account—declines to pay me that visit which we had arranged a few weeks since.

I am quite sure of one thing, my dear Arthur : and that is, that it would be quite unpardonable in me if I were not to cast about how to put an end to this state of things. You know better than anyone the intense pleasure which it gives to your mother and myself when you do well, and how anxious we are to make you happy. I

am thankful that she is not at Wantage, for it would go far towards marring her peace of mind if she saw this letter. I really dare not show it to her.

A few days still remain of the half-year. Do what you can in them. Gather up the fragments; and remember that henceforth I shall consider myself bound to see to work in the Holidays as I have never, except in the matter of Upper Division trials, done before. Your loving father,

W. J. B.

The following reminiscences of A. J. B. at Eton are kindly jotted down for me by the Rev. V. S. Stuckey Coles:

Arthur Butler was two Divisions above me at Eton, and he was near the head of a Division in which were Frederick William Puller, now a Cowley Father, the present Sir [Charles] Thomas Acland, and Stephen Gladstone. I became interested in him for his father's sake, who was a conspicuous figure among the clergy who belonged to the Anglo-Catholic Revival. After a time I went to stay at Wantage with one of Mr. Butler's curates, and he questioned me about his son. I told him that I thought Arthur sometimes went

to the "Christopher," where there was a bar which was thought superior to the college "Tap." (I was rather a prig about these places, having been indoctrinated by a Cambridge Etonian who had coached me before I came to Eton. He induced my father to get me to promise never to go to "Tap"; and I had a bad time.)

Some time after, Arthur Butler waited one day in the Ante-Chapel till my Division came down, and said, "Why did you tell my father that I drank at the 'Christopher'?" I forget what answer I made, but Arthur never referred to the subject again, and I do not think he bore any malice. I think he chose the place and time of his remonstrance that it might be made without any further discussion. . . . I think Arthur's father said to me later, "It was not true that Arthur drank at the 'Christopher'," taking his son's denial as final.

Arthur Butler and I were contrasted very strongly. He was the mainly reticent son of a strong leader of the Revival; I was an ardent and somewhat foolish fellow, dissatisfied with my own father, who was an admirable clergyman, because he did not find himself at that time in the same stream. I envied Butler his father, and thought he did not value his good fortune.

He never had anything to do with the attempts at Tractarian movements which went on amongst some of us. Nor did he favour some audacious literary enterprises which were more or less supported by names which have since come to the front—Sir William Anson and Sir Frederick Pollock. Arthur Butler did his proper work well and quietly, kept his own counsel, observed what happened at home and at school, and got a good training for his excellent abilities.

It has always seemed to me that he illustrates a theory I am inclined to believe in, that most capable men take after their mothers in mind, as the daughters after their fathers. Mrs. Butler was a friend of Charlotte Yonge, and shared with her the austere refinement and severe self-discipline of the Tractarian lady. I feel that I know Arthur better as reflected in his mother than in the little I saw of him at school.

Arthur Butler was very kind to me. When I arrived as a deacon, in a cassock, at Wantage (I have been afflicted with obesity from a child), he remarked, "The round man has got at last into the round hole"; and he always approved of me as a person who was meant to be what I had become, even if he thought I had been wanting in restraint when I was a boy.

James Riddell—" Professor " to A. J. B., as to the rest of the family—has been urgent for some time that Arthur shall try for a scholarship at Balliol, of which he is Tutor. But the boy—whose heart is set on going to Cambridge and to Trinity, his father's college—holds to this purpose under cover of his usual light-hearted *insouciance.* His parents are secretly on his side. On October 13, 1861, Mrs. Butler writes that Grace has driven over to Farnboro' Road to inquire for a hamper which has gone astray and " to meet Professor. He stays with us till Thursday next. We must try to beg you off Balliol, though it is very difficult to withstand his kind desire of having you if possible."

The boy yields to his friend's importunity, goes up and sits for the Balliol scholarship in November 1861, and does not get it—partly because he is too young (17), partly because he is not trying very hard. Riddell reports on " the Arturian performance " :

As to his general place, I should think he may have come about thirteenth, the real competition

being among the first nine. This number of leading horses was greater than usual—the year being an unusually good one. It struck me on the whole that Arthur is rather young for his years —in fact quite as young as he looks.

The writer then discusses the papers in detail, and winds up :

I think I have anatomised the dear boy enough. What I have said he needs is *time*. It was a great pleasure to have him staying with me. He came of himself to both Chapels daily. One of his studies was a little book on Hebrew accentuation which lay on my table."

All this—with all the correspondence, all testimony of surviving relatives and friends, and all I know of him later and gathered in many talks —makes up for me a clear and fairly consistent portrait of a boy whose mental powers, somewhat overpressed in the nursery (he could read easily at the age of four), and constantly in danger of being overpressed—taught at any rate to be suspicious of that danger—found shelter, and perhaps refreshment, in such idling as a clever boy may easily command in a great Public School ; and

I see them by consequence, after lying dormant through an instinct of self-preservation, in some ways tardy in developing. I note, on the one side, that—whatever he is losing—he is preserving his independence, "the essential jewel of his soul." I note further that if he does not want a scholarship—in college at Eton, or again at Balliol—he misses it, and with a courtesy as gentle as is his obstinacy to pursue what he desires. The fault of it (if it be a fault) lies in his being nowise ambitious, or ambitious only for what he *likes*.

None the less, Butler, holding to this way, rose before leaving Eton to be a quite considerable person in the school: "Newcastle Select," 1861–3; Tomline Prizeman, 1862; and finally Captain of Oppidans. He had, moreover (if one may say so who, by difference of age and accident of circumstance, entered late into the privilege), a great capacity for friendship and no small discrimination in its exercise. To alter a phrase of Burke's, he cultivated friendships, yet so as to have them at once strong and selected: in evidence of which at this point it is enough to quote a short list of

his particular friends during his last years at Eton and add that he kept them through life : Stephen James Fremantle (of whom more shall be told by-and-by) ; Lord Francis Hervey ; H. W. H. Hoare; Anson (afterwards Sir William Anson, Warden of All Souls, whose recent death all Oxford laments and whom to know was to admire the most perfect union of public conscience with private sincerity, charm and wit) ; Pollock (Sir Frederick Pollock, who will hereafter have something to say in these pages). In the 1862 competition for the Newcastle Butler was bracketed third with Fremantle and Pollock, and in 1863 was again bracketed third with Pollock. There is a tradition that this time he would have been an easy winner but for the burden imposed on him of supervising, as Captain of Oppidans, the preparations just then being made by the school for a welcome to Edward, Prince of Wales, and his bride Alexandra. His brother William, who had followed him to Eton, records that " odds were laid on him when I was only a lower boy."

Fremantle, Anson, and Hervey went on to

Oxford: Pollock, with Butler, to Cambridge. These names will recur in this Memoir. The strict historian here pauses to record that among this band Butler was affectionately known as "Pig"—because in person, habit, and mind he so little resembled one.

He left Eton at the end of the first half, 1863. In April he sat for a Minor Scholarship at Cambridge, and was elected. In those days one could not be admitted scholar of Trinity save on a "Minor" Scholarship. He had—in that curiously idle yet persistent way which I trace through the packets of family anxiety on which, if he ever retorted, no retort is preserved—won his set hope, to be admitted a Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge. Next year (1864) he duly improved upon Minor Scholar by winning a Bell Scholarship.

CHAPTER III

Cambridge Recollection of A. J. B.

1863–1870

Contributed by Henry Jackson, O.M., Litt.D., Regius Professor of Greek in the University

Arthur John Butler's name was entered on the boards of Trinity College, 16th September 1862. On 18th April 1863 he was elected to a Minor Scholarship, and in October 1863 he began residence. In 1864 he was elected to the second Bell Scholarship. On 29th April 1865 he was admitted a foundation scholar of the college. (At that time no one was allowed to compete for a foundation scholarship before the Easter vacation of his second year.) In 1867 he was placed 19th Junior Optime in the Mathematical Tripos and 8th in the First Class of the Classical Tripos. He was admitted Fellow, 11th October 1869, and vacated his fellowship by marriage

early in 1875. He took the degree of B.A. in 1867, and that of M.A. in 1870. These are the bald facts of Butler's Cambridge career.

I began to know Butler in his freshman's term, when I, five years his senior, was a Bachelor Scholar, taking pupils and reading for a fellowship. We met for the first time at the rooms of his tutor, Robert Burn, frankest and kindest of men. Butler sat beside me at dinner. He was boyish, good-looking, bright, eager, self-possessed. (There is a photograph which admirably represents his appearance at that time. By the way, in those days and for long afterwards he carried an eye-glass, and, like his father, dispensed with the customary string. It was his boast that once, when his boat upset, he did not lose his eyeglass during immersion.) Then as always he was very ready to make friends : and he and I talked hard all the evening. During the preceding Long Vacation he had spent several weeks at Oxford, where his father, at that time Vicar of Wantage, had intimate friends : and as I had spent two or three days at Balliol in 1862, we had no lack of topics of conversation. I do not remember what was

the next step in our acquaintance; but I am sure that we were soon sufficiently intimate to argue, to dispute, and very flatly to contradict one another.

Amongst his contemporaries Butler had many friends. I fancy that there was just then at Trinity an unusually large number of conspicuous Etonians, and, as a matter of course, he had known all of them at school. In particular, I think of R. G. Arbuthnot, F. W. Puller, G. H. Inck, J. R. Selwyn, Frederick Pollock, V. H. B. Kennett-Barrington, and Edmond Fitzmaurice. Butler's Minor Scholarship brought him into touch with reading men such as Sidney Colvin and W. K. Clifford. He was a zealous member of the Third Trinity Boat Club, and so became acquainted with men who frequented the river, and especially with "Westminsters," such as G. T. M. O'Brien, A. J. Mackey, and F. W. Maclean. I think that he was a member of the Rifle Corps, and this must have brought him into relations with yet another group. Then again, at my rooms and elsewhere, he met and became acquainted with men, senior to himself, such as

J. W. Clark, B.A. 1856; Henry Sidgwick, B.A. 1859; W. E. Currey, B.A. 1863; A. Cockshott, B.A. 1864; J. H. Swainson, B.A. 1864; J. J. Pulleine, B.A. 1865; W. P. Crawley, B.A. 1866; and he renewed his friendship with Henry Brandreth, B.A. 1857, whose pupil in mathematics he had been at Eton, and who came back into residence about this time. These typical names at once occur to me; but I am well aware that many might be added to the list. Presently, his election into a little essay society which, during ninety years, has linked together successive generations of Cambridge men, still further enlarged the range of his friendships.

Fifty years ago an undergraduate was classed under one or other of two heads: he was either a "reading man" or a "rowing man." But it must be explained that the verb "row" rhymed with "cow" and "now" and not with "blow" and "know," and that it had nothing to do with exercise taken on the river. Butler was, of course, a "reading man." But again, there were then, as no doubt there are now, two sorts of reading men. There were some who gave to preparation

for a Tripos or for two Triposes a whole-hearted devotion, and read in a business-like way seven or eight hours a day ; and again there were others who, having read hard at school, were carried away at the University by the delights of freedom, and allowed miscellaneous reading and the society of their contemporaries to trench upon hours which might have been given to the methodical study of mathematics or classics or both. I think that Butler was a reading man of the latter sort. He never dropped his mathematics ; but I suspect that he added little to what he had read at school. In classics he read steadily, and added largely to his knowledge ; but I do not think that he tried to make the most of himself for the purpose of the Tripos. I have to acknowledge that in this respect all my sympathies were with him : for I too, in my undergraduate years, had become weary of the routine of school studies and had taken advantage of the greater freedom of the University. I have sometimes wondered whether—"in the long run," as economists say—we gained or lost by our independence ; but it is certain that preparation

for life is more important than ~~five-mile~~ successes ; juvenile and, looking backwards, I am not altogether sorry that in those days some of us were a little indifferent to academic competitions and successes. I think that Butler read with Richard Shilleto, the great " coach " or private tutor, from whom, rather than from college lecturers, the better classical men received their training. But somehow I knew very little about Butler's preparations for the two Triposes. I suppose that there were other things to occupy our thoughts ; and, although I became an Assistant Tutor a month or two before he took the Classical Tripos, I did not see any of his work.

In the sixties the B.A. period was even more enjoyable than the undergraduate years. Freed from the slavery of the Tripos, the Bachelor Scholar of Trinity who proposed to " sit " for a fellowship consolidated his knowledge by taking pupils, and enlarged the scope of his private reading. His philosophical studies were, no doubt, amateurish, but they were eminently educational. For he was learning to think for himself ; and, as his days were spent with contemporaries

similarly engaged, there was plenty of stimulating dialectic. In this stage Butler was greatly influenced by the writings of John Stuart Mill; and I observe that some of the essays which he wrote for the little society above mentioned are inspired by Aristotle's *Ethics*. I imagine that his study of that admirable treatise led the way to the careful reading of the *Metaphysics*, which bore good fruit in his Commentary on Dante. This, however, came later; for in the sixties metaphysical studies, both ancient and modern, were at low tide.

I think that in the summers of 1867, 1868, 1869, Butler had small reading-parties at Clovelly. One day in the summer of 1869, when he was about to "sit" for a fellowship for the last time, I received a letter addressed in a hand which I recognised as his, but it was his beautiful hand with a notable difference. When I opened the envelope, I learnt to my dismay that he had fallen from the quay, and, having broken a bone or bones in the right hand was writing with the left. When he presently returned to college, I offered to ask the electors to allow me to

act as his amanuensis in the examination. His answer was that he could not work comfortably with an amanuensis, and that he proposed to write his papers with his left hand. I confess that while I admired his serene courage, I regretted his decision. Happily, rapid penmanship was not as important in the Trinity Fellowship Examination as in the examinations of the Senate House, and Butler's policy was justified by success. I remember well my relief when, during the progress of the examination, one of the electors confided to me that Butler was doing very well. I do not remember how long he continued to reside after his admission to the fellowship; but my impression is that he was appointed to an examinership in the Education Department before the end of 1869. In the autumn of 1868 and the spring of 1869, Butler and John Willis Clark read Dante together; and in this way Butler embarked upon his life's study.

There was at Cambridge in those days an inordinate dread of what was indifferently called "sciolism" and "omniscience." That is to say, we shrank from expressing an opinion on any

subject unless we had made it in some sort our own ; and we feared to talk to an expert about his specialty, lest we should be suspected of what the Greeks called δοξοσοφια, "conceit of knowledge." Butler resented this conventional attitude. When he met an expert, he boldly questioned him about his speciality ; and, later, he would rise and use effectively the knowledge which he had thus acquired. In that brilliant but short-lived periodical, *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, "Peregrine Courtney" (W. M. Praed) says to "Tristram Merton" (T. B. Macaulay), "A truce to your omniscience, Tristram." I am afraid that in the everyday life of 1867 we were not as polite as Praed had been in print some forty years before, and that our protests were sometimes rather crudely expressed. They drew from Butler an earnest and effective reply, in the shape of an essay on the question, "Is a little knowledge a dangerous thing ?" That essay is now before me, and I take from it the following extract :

Men are so determined to seize upon the bad tendencies of things, to the oversight of any advantages that are or may be got out of them, that

"sciolist," "smatterer," "superficial," are as opprobrious terms as you need wish to apply to your dearest friend; "dilettante" is perhaps a shade less offensive, but still far from a compliment. Nor is this a feeling produced by modern thought only, for we have all heard of the man whom the gods had made neither digger nor plougher, who knew many things, but knew them all badly. Now I wish to record my opinion that Margites was probably very far from being a useless member of society: he would in all probability have been able to talk a little, intelligently, on most subjects, and this is no such bad thing: still more he would undoubtedly have been an intelligent listener, which is a very good thing. This brings me to the test of expediency as applied to the possession of a little learning. In the first place, though on this it is of course impossible to speak with any certainty, my own view would be that the man of mediocrity in many pursuits enjoys existence far more than he who tries to excel in one. For while to the latter a disappointment may be crushing, the other, if baffled in one line, can always try a fresh one, and can counteract the pain of failure in one direction by the pleasure resulting from progress in another. But it is in his intercourse with others that his superiority will be especially made manifest. What can possibly be a greater nuisance than to

be thrown with a man of one idea or one taste, whether the idea be the greatest improvement of his species or the taste the highest art, unless indeed you yourself happen likewise to be a man of the same one idea or taste, in which case I only hope you may meet with your own counterpart as soon as possible, and remain as long as possible in his company. Seriously, however, I think no one will deny that, if he had his choice, he would prefer the companion of various knowledge though in every branch his learning might be little, to a man who had given his whole existence to perfecting himself in some one line. We admire a man of this kind from a distance, and like to see his picture, and hear anecdotes of his infancy, but we do not feel as if we should care to know him, except in so far as we might use him as we should a treatise on his special subject. But with the other we feel that we should probably have a dozen points of contact and common interest, and that there would be many directions in which we should be able to reciprocally improve each other's knowledge of men and things.

I thought at the time that Butler completely made out his case, and since those days I have learnt to dread the narrow specialism which is the besetting sin of the Cambridge curriculum.

Butler never lost his catholicity of interest, and throughout life it served him well.

Others of his essays have survived. One of them has for its subject, "Is Swinburne or Morris the greater poet?" and sums up very emphatically against Swinburne and in favour of Morris. Another puts the question: εἴρων ἢ ἀλάζων; A Cambridge man to the core, he voted for the εἴρων as against the ἀλάζων, for the man who understates his claims rather than for the man who overstates them; but he qualified this conclusion by the remark that "we are in danger of letting British reserve and dread of ridicule overpower the right claimed by every Briton, as well as American, of saying what he darn pleases, and that the results may be more serious than at first sight seems possible." An essay on the question, "Are the ties of consanguinity a relic of Barbarism?" concludes that at the present time (1870) family ties are unwarrantably "protected," and that "Free-trade in friends and acquaintances is no less important to the well-being of mankind in the present stage of civilisation than that in the commodities of the breakfast table." "Is

Good Nature dangerous to Society ? " was another characteristic question, and no one who knew Butler will doubt what his answer was. I pick out these subjects for mention because I think that those who knew Butler in later years may like to hear that in early essays, written, not for publication, but that they might give occasion for informal discussion, he was already insisting upon principles to which he was always true. For, at the end of his life, he dreaded narrow specialisation, and affirmed his right to take an outsider's interest in many subjects ; he hated sensuousness in poetry ; he protested against timidity in the formation and expression of opinion ; and he resented subservience to conventional standards. It was a dull time in politics, and in our youthful discussions we affected to ignore such things ; but I note that then, as always, Butler was a convinced free-trader. And here I may add that he was a pronounced and steadfast Liberal, and that Mr. Gladstone never had a more loyal follower.

Once, and once only, Butler and I travelled together. Towards the end of June 1877, my

wife and I, having with us my wife's sister and our friend Mrs. F. C. Dickson, met the Butlers by agreement at Chur. (I still remember how about midnight a party of young fellows tramped through the town singing "Es ist bestimmt.") Thence the ladies of the party drove, and Arthur and I walked, the first day to Tiefenkasten, the second to Silvaplana. We had secured rooms there at a countrified but comfortable inn. The landlady naïvely wondered how it was that we had preferred her simple hostelry, "Zum wilden Mann," to the "Post," where, she told us, we should have had a French waiter and a billiard-table. We had some difficulty in satisfying her that we did not care for those luxuries, and that we were thoroughly content with our accommodation. I think that, whilst I pondered over J. S. Mill's *Logic* and watched the busy life of an anthill, the Arthur Butlers did a good deal of walking. Most certainly, when they and I walked to the Fuorcla Surlej and found ourselves up to our knees in soft snow, I had to acknowledge that they were in far better condition than I. I think of another pleasant walk through Sils

Maria to the Fex Thal. At night we read Shakespeare. It has been said, I think by Leslie Stephen, that the Engadine is the one dull valley in Switzerland; but I have pleasant recollections of our stay there. In particular, I like to think of the goatherd gathering his goats to the sound of his pipe in the early morning, and of the little children coming out of their homes to catch and hug their playmates as they returned in the afternoon. Presently the Butlers left us for Tirol and then the rest of us dropped down the precipitous Maloia into Italy.

It cannot be said that Butler's Cambridge life ended when he ceased to reside. When he vacated his fellowship, it was soon understood between us that he was to stay with me, when he came to Cambridge, at my house so long as I occupied Croft Cottage, and, after I gave it up in 1890, in college. In later years he had always something to do at the college library or at the library of the University. There were editions of Dante to be consulted, or productions of the early presses to be investigated, or historical facts to be looked up in connexion with the work which he was doing at the Record Office. In our leisure

hours we had abundant talk about old friends, about books, about politics, academic and imperial, and about the gossip which Butler brought from town.

Possibly his affection for Cambridge as he had known it in his youth, made him, as it makes many, a little intolerant of academic reform. His views in such matters were definitely conceived, and it would have been idle to try to argue with him about them. He was always careful to look up his resident friends, and he liked to make acquaintance with men who had recently joined the Trinity high table. He seldom missed the annual commemoration feast; and, as on many other occasions, he sat next me at the commemoration feast of 1909. I cannot think that there was ever a non-resident ex-fellow who kept himself more completely in touch with the resident society. Nor can I think that there was ever a Trinity man who loved the college more fervently. A gift to the chapel not long before his death was clearly meant to be a last token of his loyalty and affection.

A few notes on A. J. B. at Cambridge by his life-long friend, Sir Frederick Pollock, may serve as appendix to Dr. Jackson's recollections and conclude this chapter.

A. J. B. went up to Trinity College from Eton in October 1863, as I did. We took our degrees in '67 and were elected Fellows in '68. Then I went down to read law in London. He stayed up a few terms more, I rather think, and soon was appointed an Examiner in the Education Office.

The most characteristic part of our Cambridge life was the Long Vacation, when the scholars of the college who meant real business in the Triposes came into residence free from lecture routine in July and August. This was before even lawn tennis was invented—much less cycling—which ceased to be a strange sight only in the eighties, I think, and became fashionable only in the nineties. We played croquet and bowls at the back of the library—bathed in Byron's pool—now and then had a boating excursion above Grantchester (though the only one I can swear

to was towards the end of May term '68)—besides the usual afternoon walks, which many reading men then thought sufficient exercise. Regular boats were of course suspended. A. J. B. was, I think, in the Third Trinity (Eton and Westminster men) second boat.

We regarded reading parties as all very well for freshmen (and Oxford men : how the latter got any real work done we did not understand).

There was lots of talk about all sorts of things —Oxford as well as Cambridge men know that. A. J. B. was not exactly brilliant but always alert —very much on the spot about things he knew— and kept things up to the mark by intelligent scepticism about what he did not know. Here I am inevitably reading in later memories, but I don't think the cast of his mind changed much.

The special interest in Dante had not begun, to the best of my recollection, when we left Cambridge.

Butler ought to have done better in mathematics. Nobody quite knew why he was only a Junior Op. (third class in Mathematical Tripos). I never quite forgave him, for if he had done as

he ought we should certainly have got both the classical (Chancellor's) medals for Eton. (The mathematical qualification has now been abolished many years.)

His classical scholarship was not dazzling, but I am sure very sound. Later he made himself as good a medievalist as one shall desire.

CHAPTER IV

The Trinity Fellowship

1867—1870

The conscientious biographer must now hark back a little and articulate Dr. Jackson's reminiscences with a few dates and other dry bones of record; certainly few, and not (it is hoped) too dry, since they are taken from A. J. B.'s own warm-hearted letters. He was ever a good correspondent, especially with his mother.

He had rooms in the Great Court of Trinity, in a gatehouse midway in the block of buildings which is on your left as you enter. For classics he went to the great men Shilleto and Jebb; for mathematics to Routh, most famous of "coaches." Almost from the first we find his tutor (Robert Burn) advising him that, if he wants to win a Trinity Fellowship, he should lean his weight upon classics.

As far as I can foresee, it is plain that there will be no ordinary competition for Fellowships in your year, and that you will have to work hard and steadily to get one. Now what I am afraid of in your case is that you should read mathematics so far as to injure your classical degree very seriously, and yet not far enough to increase your chance of a Fellowship. My advice would therefore be that you should only give up to mathematics just so much time as is required to make you a safe Senior Opt., and should not attempt to read more subjects than this.

Some excellent advice follows on classical reading; for example:

The most finished undergraduate scholars I have known have been those who used to read such authors as Thucydides or Sophocles or Tacitus right through at a breath, till they became saturated with the spirit of the language and gained an intuitive perception of the meaning, from having completely entered into the point of view of the author.

Now, if an Oxford man may say it—and the reader, later on, will perceive that I do not seeking to interpret Butler's life frankly, as he

would have wished, say it idly—what strikes me as odd in the first of these two quotations, as throughout Butler's own letters of this period, is the intentness with which these Trinity men observe one another as competitors for a definite goal. The Fellowship may lie a year, or two years, or three years ahead ; but it always looms. And the rivalry is constantly generous. Still it is there : a preoccupation as devout among seniors and juniors as that of any racing-stable, with A's "form," B's "condition," C's latest "trial," D's "outside chance" : and from my recollections of another University I cannot fetch anything like it, even remotely.

A. J. B., as his letters prove, is no more indifferent to it than any other of his compeers. He accepts and thoroughly enjoys his *milieu*— it is just what with gentle pertinacity he has been seeking ; and the Fellowship lies ahead. He is patently one of the marked men, in the running. As patently he is a shy horse, not a certainty in the betting. He has his own way of diffusing himself : he plays cricket and football keenly but intermittently, after the fashion

of those days: he rows in the Third Trinity third boat:

The May races began to-day. Alas, alas; alas, alas! We, 3rd Trinity 3rd boat, got bumped by 1st Trinity 5th. We were none of us in training, and had never rowed together before. They were. We had bad steering. They had good. Perhaps we shall bump them back to-morrow. (May 11, 1864.)

He heeds not his tutor's sagacious counsel to restrain the pursuit of mathematics to strict limits of profit. He idles after the study, doing too little while dallying with too much. He is intrigued many times by the notion of carrying the study on and into astronomy:

I had some delightful star-gazing the other [night], through a big telescope of Coutts Trotter's. I found him in the Court about 12, and stayed looking at all sorts of things for about an hour. He showed me a double star; the small one quite green, like an emerald; and many other pretty things. Observe Mars, rising about 10; just in line with, and close to the Twins, a little to the left of Orion. The 3 stars make a beautiful object. Also look out for

shooting stars on the 13th. . . . Hoppett has been made Head-porter. We suggested that the Scholars would like to drink his health; but he did not see it in that light. (Nov. 11, 1864.)

I have had a letter from Brandreth, wherein he recommends me to go in for the Sheepshanks' Astronomical Exhibition this time next year. The only objection is that it is not vacant until the year after, when I shall not be competent. . . . But I am glad he thinks I may yet do some good in that line. (Oct. 31, 1865.)

He was not well in health that summer. The upshot was that he did rather miserably in the Mathematical Tripos of 1867, getting only a Junior Optime's place. He writes to his mother:

In spite of my misfortunes I think I have succeeded in remembering your birthday at the right time this year. . . . I hear that they drew the line higher than usual: undoubtedly the papers, 5th day especially, were much harder than any I have ever seen. In fact, the pace was too fast for me, particularly when I was not in the very best condition. (Jan. 28, 1867.)

The worst of his ill-success is that it shakes his nerve, and his usual sunny courage for the moment deserts him at the prospect of the Classical Tripos, to him far more important than the Mathematical, and now close ahead:

I think both the luck and brains have passed on to Billy.[1]. . . I am getting to feel worse than I ever did before, except before Upper Division Trials. It is all that abominable Math. Tripos. . . . I am afraid, too, that Pollock is a little shaky. He has neglected his Classics a little too much. On the whole our good year will be a lamentable fiasco. There will probably not be a single Double First. You need not be afraid of my not doing all I can: only "can" is a very variable expression. . . . I do not think I can miss a first class, but I am past being astonished at anything. I shall most likely do what I have never done yet, viz. lose my head entirely. That is enough about me. . . . (Feb. 5, 1867.)

Mrs. Butler, of course, shows this letter to her husband, who loses no time in answering it, with all the enlightened wisdom of love:

[1] His younger brother, who had just passed into the India Office by competition.

My dearest Arthur,—I write a line to go in your Mother's letter, just to add my word, and to beg you not to fash or fret or worry yourself about the Classical Tripos. Just be calm and cheerful, and all will come right. Of course, we are all grieved at your disappointment in the Math. Trip. But I have lived long enough to see that such misfortunes are quite within compass of retrievement. Cotton's case was one in point. I remember how disappointed we all were when he took his degree. Yet he was the best man of his year, as was proved afterwards, and as the Trinity people shewed that they believed him to be, by electing him to a Fellowship. Do not get out of heart or miserable because a struggle lies before you. But gather up your strength like a good fellow as you are, and leave the result with Him, in whose wise and loving hand all success and promotion lie. God bless and keep you ever, my dearest Child.

Your most loving Father,

W. J. B.

After all, the Classical Tripos of 1867 did not prove to be the fiasco—"wash-out," I believe, in the modern undergraduate's vernacular—of "our good year" so gloomily vaticinated.

Sandys of St. John's, to be sure (now Sir John Sandys, and for many years Public Orator of the University), was Senior Classic. But Pollock was Second Classic; Colvin, of Trinity (now Sir Sidney Colvin), came third; Cole, of King's, fourth; Daniell, of Trinity, fifth, with second Chancellor's medal; Cox, of St. John's, sixth; Warr, of Trinity Hall, seventh; A. J. B. eighth. I have omitted to say that, mathematically, 1867 was Niven of Trinity's year, with Clifford of Trinity close up.

All the eight named as leading in the Classical Tripos took Fellowships; and Dr. Jackson has already told how A. J. B. won his, writing the papers painfully with his left hand (in pencil, by permission). He himself always averred that this performance had really done the trick—"The examiners probably said, 'If this chap can do so well with his left hand, what *would* he not do with his right!'" The telegrams announcing his success, and characteristically worded, *All right, Arthur*, found his father at Liverpool, his mother at home at Wantage. "I think," wrote his father, "the servant who

placed the telegraphic message in my hands must have set me down as crazy."

You cannot imagine the relief which it gave me, nor what it is to see the hopes of 25 years at last, after so many variations, crowned with success. All those were absent with whom I should have loved to speak . . . and my only real relief was to thank, on my knees and with all my heart, that good God and Father who has watched over and blest you in all, and *in* your dearest Mother and myself with so many mercies.

His mother wrote—and the reader will remark how faithfully both parents' letters echo and re-echo :

I cannot put off telling you how acceptably your 2 words came in with 5 o'clock tea yesterday. . . . We were all very glad together, specially dear Grandpapa. I wrote off at once to [she names various relatives and friends]. Perhaps you will smile with a grain or more of contempt at my caring, or these good people caring, about the fulfilment of a wish dating from a quarter of a century back. Your tendency is to be "philosophical" and indifferent.[1] . . .

[1] His sister, Mrs. Guinness, writes that, "even when he gained the Fellowship at Trinity, he took it in a matter-of-fact way."

But do not, my darling, forget to thank God, who is the giver of all good gifts, great or small. . . . My thoughts will turn to the joy we should have had in telling our dear Professor.[1]

Sidney Colvin wrote :

Touche-là ! I shake your hand (the left one under the circumstances).

And Stephen Fremantle, from ribald Oxford, where he was now a Senior Student of Christ Church :

There was an old Fellow of Trinity Who raised $x + 1$ to Infinity, and, in congratulating you most heartily, I must be allowed to hope that your life will be spent on some more useful object. It is very gratifying that you should have attained the great end of a Cambridge young man's existence—and two Eton men out of four is a good average.

Dr. Jackson (p. 49) would date A. J. B.'s devotion to Dante from the autumn and spring of 1868–9, when he and J. W. Clark read the poet together. But I find an earlier hint in a memorandum by his sister, Mrs. Knight ("Emma").

[1] James Riddell had died the year before.

After my eldest sister married, in 1866, I became Arthur's chief companion at home. We used to walk and talk together, and he let me read Latin with him—Virgil and Catullus. I have still a bit of translation from Catullus of that date, with his corrections and comments. In 1867 he spent some time at home while reading for his Fellowship. There was a very heavy fall of snow in March, and I remember our walks over the Downs, sometimes finding ourselves on the top of a hedge, the snowdrifts having entirely filled the hollow road. It must have been about this time that he told me of his ambition to bring out an edition of the *Divina Commedia*.

But memories, at this distance of time, are not to be cited as opposing evidence on so nice a point, which, moreover, is of small importance. A letter to his mother from the Engadine, dated June 16, 1867, testifies more precisely that he is becoming a skilful Alpinist. But mountaineering—the *sacer furor montium*, and secondary passion of his life—shall be given a chapter to itself by and by.

The first years of his Fellowship were perhaps the blithest of A. J. B.'s life. He was young,

strong, and (like David) goodly to look at. Intellectually, though in some respects his mental powers were late in developing, he had come to his own. He was sensitively impressionable to the arts, especially to poetry and music (for which his love lasted, although his interest in new composers declined somewhat in later life); and —thanks to his mother, who had an almost fierce horror of anything that pretended to be the best and was not—he knew how to choose. His mind was eagerly, affectionately inquisitive about all created things, from men and women to birds, flowers, stones; and with men he had an air of accost, gay, imperturbably free and open and charming and self-assured (because unconscious, as it was guiltless, of *arrière pensée*), which engaged them to be friends before they knew it. He had won the prize on which his heart, and others for his sake, had been set—as I see it, too intently. Still, it was won. Moreover, he was of the age, being unspoilt, to fall in love; and meanwhile, being unspoilt, he brought home to Wantage the same boyish loyal affection as ever.

Yet his sisters note that his reserve, always

instinctive on some matters, had to be spread now to extend over some others. As I have tried to show, in this atmosphere of solicitous family love Arthur had from the first to guard, and did guard unconsciously, his spirit's freedom. He had now, more consciously, to preserve (as Marcus Aurelius terms it) "with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude" among those whose feelings he could least bear to offend. For at Cambridge he had become, as he remained to the end, a Liberal, in practical politics as in habit of mind. The figure of Gladstone fascinated him; and not only as a commandingly great figure, or as the figure of Liberal ideas personified, but also as the figure of a great Church layman. His sister Grace's words put it very simply and truly:

It seems to me that Arthur's was a very conservative nature in religious and personal matters. Although in politics he was a strong Liberal, yet the early atmosphere influenced him through life, and he remained true to his bringing up in religious ways, though always reserved in expressing any views. His father was his ideal of

what a clergyman should be, and the standard by which he judged all the other clergy.

Here—so constant was A. J. B. to home—I may quite fittingly introduce some recollections of him by Archdeacon Houblon, at one time assistant curate at Wantage; though they actually date from 1873:

Butler never failed to put in an appearance at the Vicarage at the great Church Festivals. Home had an amazingly close hold upon him, and amidst the throng of worshippers in the old Parish Church, Butler was always to be seen on these occasions at the eight o'clock service with his mother and sisters and younger brother.

In those days the Curates always shared the breakfast and midday meal at the Vicarage, and I, as the son of an old and intimate friend of the Vicar's, was a frequent guest at supper also. Butler always had a hearty and kindly welcome for his Father's Curates, as soon as he got to know them, and he seemed to take a real interest in them individually, and kept in touch with them in their after careers.

The life at the Vicarage was a strenuous life indeed, and in earlier days almost Spartan in its

simplicity; the wants of the Parish always came first; but the family circle was distinguished beyond any other circle that I have ever known, I think, for intellectual capacity and brilliant wit, combined with family affection and deep religious conviction.

Butler's great ability and independence of judgment always impressed us curates greatly, at those Festival home-comings of which I spoke just now. He never lost his love for the old home of his childhood, and the impress of that home upon his character was never lost in after life. During the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century young men of the front rank in intellectual capacity commonly held but loosely to the cardinal truths of revealed Christianity; but Butler always clung to the Church of England, its system and religious observances, and at the last asked that he might be buried in Wantage Cemetery. I have always understood that the remembrance of his Mother's early teaching, and reverence for her character and intellect and devotion, were in no small degree responsible for this.

The other side of his character with which I was specially brought into contact in later years concerns his great social gifts and his love of outdoor life. He had a keen interest in all

kinds of sport and athletic contests. Though not himself a sportsman, *i.e.* not himself addicted to shooting and hunting, he was eminently sportsmanlike, both in character and action. He was a great walker, devoted to nature and outdoor life; he loved the Berkshire downs, the Surrey hills, and the seaside beauties of the lovely West of England coasts: but his chief delight was in foreign travel. I was more than once his fellow-traveller in his beloved Tirol. He was an ardent member of the Alpine Club; his knowledge of that beautiful country, his familiarity with both German and Italian, his untiring energy and his fast friendship with his Tirol guides, combined to make him a delightful travelling companion. On my first trip with him I freely confess that I was outpaced by him and got a bit overdone; but I shall never forget a tour which he planned in London for the summer of 1890, and planned so well that, favoured by fine weather, we ascended four peaks in the Ortler District, including the König Spitz and the Adamello, and crossed, I think, three high Passes, accomplishing each item in the programme on the exact day for which he had planned it, and parted at Botzen, I for Ober Ammergau, and he for further rambles in his beloved mountains.

In fact, to get Butler at his best you had (as I can vouch) to take him on a holiday and combine that holiday with plenty of strenuous exercise, frank talk, and a something craggy to revert unto at intervals and knock the mind upon. I recall one such holiday in which the something craggy was provided by a few sheets of the Shakespeare 1623 Folio (in cheap reprint, so that it mattered not when they got mixed up with the sandwiches), and my obstinacy that Shakespeare, to be understood, must be read in that form. And I could have taken oath that A. J. B. must have run a dead heat with "the grave man, nick-named Adam"—a poetical invention—as the perfect tutor for an Oxford or a Cambridge reading-party, even before I had for proof the following joyous pages contributed by Mr. Walter Herries Pollock:

Mr. Pollock's Narrative of Clovelly

When as a recent undergraduate at Trinity, Cambridge, I was introduced to Arthur Butler, then a young don of brilliant past and future, I recognised, very slightly altered, the Captain

of the Oppidans, whom I, a Colleger in his first half, had constantly watched with distant admiration as he walked up chapel to his own place. I saw close the qualities I had guessed at and admired from afar — decision, alertness, a thoroughly well-groomed air of one neither bashful nor over-confident, a kind of friendly strength with a touch of aloofness—how can one describe these first impressions of youth with any accuracy? Anyhow, I counted it a good day when we met, and the later day when Arthur became my coach was one of the best days possible in many senses. I do not suppose it happens very often that a schoolboy's unspoken hero-worship grows afterwards into the relations of Coach and pupil at a University, and thence into a life-long and unbroken friendship. What I am to write about here, however, is a reading-party which Butler took to Clovelly in the year 1870. There were three pupils with him. The late Canon Valpy was one, Freeman (son, I think, of a distinguished cleric) and I were the other two. Clovelly then had hardly been "discovered" in the modern sense; the one small tourist steamer seldom invaded the place; the communication with Lundy Island was by sail; and it was easy enough from what one saw to reconstruct the Clovelly that figures in Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*. The inhabitants of the strange

CLOVELLY, 1870

W. H. POLLOCK, A. J. B. (with Tib), A. S. VALPY, G. B. FREEMAN

precipitous village had mostly the beautiful Devonian courtesy to begin with, and when, Butler as always showing us the way, we got beyond the stage of acquaintance, we found among them friends whom after all these years it is a joy to remember. Chief among them was John Mill, who was acknowledged as the leading spirit. He was boat-builder, mariner, philosopher, and no doubt much else if one had found it out. Among other things, he had been at a small boys' school with Charles Kingsley ; and we owed much to his taking us by the hand.

Before jotting down a few of the memories of that singularly happy reading-party, I want to say a few words in recognition and memory of Butler's unusually fine qualities as Coach for such a party. He was always bright, he had a never-failing sense of humour, he was always *bon camarade,* he never dragged on the reins, but by a quiet unexpressed authority and example, he made one work in working hours just as he made one row cheerfully in a tiring sea when need was for hard rowing. Moreover, his tact was invaluable whenever there was the least hint of pretensions and dissensions in the party. No one could be out of tune or temper for long when he was about. The instance used above belongs to one of his happiest enterprises. He

found out—he was always finding out things, or rather the village willingly told him things—that there was a disused coast-guard gig for sale at a very reasonable price. He called us into conclave, and with very little discussion we bought it, selling it again when we left at a reasonable loss. The boat could be sailed; Butler on fit occasions sailed her himself, and how he knew so many practical things I often wondered; but for the most part we rowed, and mighty good rowing in beautiful seas it was. The only difficulty we ever had has been indicated. The sky grew suddenly overcast; our Coach and Captain foresaw a touch of a squall coming; by his direction and showing we rowed hard for home, getting in just before his prescience was justified. There were many fishing expeditions in our own gig and in real fishing-boats; one night expedition after congers is vivid in memory because of its picturesque aspect and because of the exceeding strength and cunning of the congers. The fisherman in command—I think it was John Mill—had seen to it that the tackle was very strong and the bait very attractive. So the congers found it, and thereout sucked no small advantage; for they bit right through the tackle time after time, until the bait was exhausted and we were well into the small hours. I think but

for Arthur's unfailing energy and cheeriness, the party returning up the steep street to Mrs. Lee's comfortable roof might have been somewhat fractious.

On all such expeditions he had, generally, a vastly pleasant companion in the person of Tib (short for Tilburina), a beautiful Skye terrier of unimpeachable birth and breeding, a present to Butler from Mrs. Clark, mother of the late John Willis Clark, better known to his numberless friends as J. W., or, later, J.

Mrs. Clark was a remarkable and (to those who "got on" with her) a delightful old lady; but she was not easily pleased, and it certainly was not to every young man that she would have given one of her famous Skye terriers.

For Tib, she was as charming in character as she was in aspect, and soon after our first acquaintance she admitted me to a special friendship, whereof Butler, unlike some dog-lovers and dog-owners, showed never a shade of jealousy; which may be emphasised by one instance of his devotion to her—her devotion to him was obvious at every minute. We went a-sailing one day in the regulation smack to Lundy, accompanied by some young folk then staying at Clovelly Court, and of course by Tib. When we got to Lundy through the glory of a fringe of Atlantic

rollers, there was exploration galore to beguile us all: consequently the appointed time was near overrun: we had to embark in hot haste: and only when it was too late to put back we discovered that Tib was marooned on Lundy. Lamentations were great, and I saw that Butler was really distressed, but as usual he gave no sign that any who did not watch him closely could possibly discern. Next day he made up his mind to go and fetch Tib, in whatever kind of boat he could find that was at all fit for the trajet. With the help of John Mill, he accomplished it in the face of a good many difficulties. It must have been at best a singularly comfortless voyage; but he came back smiling with Tib in his arms. Then there was a great matter of starting for the first time a real lifeboat for Clovelly, and, again under Arthur's lead, we were all enlisted as members of the first committee, and felt, I hope, duly honoured. Among other results of this it came about that our leader thought of a theatrical show to swell the funds. We settled on two Maddison Morton farces, and Butler characteristically cast himself for two small parts, but was simply invaluable in getting our friends the villagers to improvise a very practicable stage in a boat-house, which held quite a paying audience. He had put me into,

in each case, a rattling part of the Charles Mathews kind, therefore not at all easy to learn. At the last moment I was obliged to drop out, having to go into mourning, and he leapt into the breach, learnt both parts to perfection, and played them with an unaffected ease and liveliness that were alone enough to carry off the whole show. One part was full of intricate, tricky "business," every point in which he took up as if he had been rehearsing for weeks.

These be but toys in themselves: yet they are no negligible part of the whole impression made on me at the time when I saw Arthur most constantly, most closely. That the friendship then knit never suffered break nor tangle in after life, when we grew, as men do, to seem much about the same age—that is truly a possession for ever.

He was at Clovelly in six consecutive years, from 1866 to 1871. This chapter must close with the tale of another reading-party, and a sadder one. The name of Stephen James Fremantle has once or twice occurred in these pages. He was born April 2, 1845, the fifth and youngest son of Lord Cottesloe. At Eton (Miss Evans' house, with Dr. Balston and William Johnson,

author of *Ionica*, for his tutors) he became one of A. J. B.'s closest friends. He won the Prince Consort's Prize for French in 1859, and the Newcastle in 1863. His name and A. J. B.'s appear next to each other in the School Lists from 1861 to 1863. Mrs. Butler writes, when both were selected for the Newcastle (letter undated, but probably 1861), "I like Arthur and Fremantle being bracketed: it will cement their friendship."

He went with a scholarship to Balliol; took a Double First: was elected a Senior Student of Christ Church, and Tutor in 1867; and in 1869 took Orders.

In August 1874 he captained a reading-party of tutors and undergraduates to Newquay, Cornwall—Scott Holland (now Canon), Frank Paget (late Bishop of Oxford), and Arthur Acland were the tutors; Laurence Hardy (M.P.), Luke Paget (now Bishop of Stepney), Spencer Holland, E. B. Reynardson, F. Greenwood, and two others named Denison and Day were the undergraduates. Nearly all of them fell ill—Frank Paget and Laurence Hardy dangerously—of typhoid from the

water of Newquay. Stephen Fremantle died at his home—Swanbourne, Winslow, Bucks—on September 16th. He had spent the previous Easter at Wantage, and helped in the services in church.

I am afraid [writes A. J. B., two days before] my dear friend Fremantle is very ill. I have heard nothing directly from them for some time: but I hear through our architect Hawkins, whose nephew has also had the fever, that there is a bad account of him. If he dies, the only perfectly good man I know in the world will have left it. James Riddell was the only other I have ever known, and he died just eight years ago. One hardly knows whether it is right to wish that such people, to whom it must be a gain to die, should stay here.

I have heard since his own death that Butler could never hear Newquay mentioned without bitter objurgations, and would never go there to the end of his life, though he was staying close by in 1907. That is true, though not true in fact. Once—late in his life, when he was visiting me—I proposed a visit to the holy well in Holywell Bay, one of the loveliest scenes in Cornwall. Four of us were to make the party

and from Holywell to walk over towards the exhumed fifth-century church of Saint Piran. All was arranged when I, charged with "personal conduct" of the tramp, happened to mention that we must detrain at Newquay. A. J. B. merely said that he held that place in aversion; and I (then not in the least knowing why he did so) assured him that we would avoid the town, and on leaving the railway station take the first cut-across to the left for the Gannell River, Pentire, and Crantock. This we did, Butler walking with us and keeping an unusual silence; nor was it until we reached the summit of West Pentire that his gaiety returned. I knew him to be in ailing health—he had, indeed, entered the shadow of his last illness—and I attributed his clouded mood to this cause. It was some years before I learned the true one: since with the same delicacy which had restrained him from upsetting the little expedition he afterwards forbore to tell what would have marred, with one pang of self-reproach, my recollections of a day not (I believe) on the whole unhappy for him and for me in my ignorance purely pleasant.

CHAPTER V

Whitehall—Marriage—Weybridge—Dante

1870—1887

In 1870 A. J. B. left Cambridge for London. He read for the bar for three months, but then received an appointment as Examiner in the Education Department, Whitehall.

His roots in Trinity were reluctantly torn up; and his new occupation yielded him small solace. Truth to say, he was never adaptable to the Civil Service, or, at any rate, to his branch of it; and did his work, albeit punctually and thoroughly, yet critically and without any pretences at enthusiasm. The Education Office since 1902, presided over by Presidents who in expeditious and frequent succession have used it for a stepping-stone or halting-place in their political careers, is, even to-day, a public scandal. We have only so far

advanced that, since 1902, its officials are allowed to have hopes and have them thwarted. In 1870, and for years after, they were not even allowed to hope. The "Department" consisted in a dull, grinding machine, and Butler was caught into the machinery. He was not the man to be happy in its clutch.

The following note by his friend and colleague, Mr. H. W. Hamilton-Hoare, makes this clear enough. Butler's friendship with Hoare (the "Hamilton" was prefixed in later life) dated from Eton. Oxford (Balliol) and Cambridge parted them, and the pair had lost sight one of another.

But in 1870 we were both given a post in the Education Office under Sir F. Sandford and Mr. Forster. Much of the work at that time was mechanical and deadly dull. This part of it was largely regulated by carefully recorded "precedents," which, in the administration of the "Annual Grant" to Elementary Schools, were our Bible. But "precedents" had no terrors for Butler, nor did he burn incense to them. On the contrary he challenged them right and left, and picked great holes in them at every conceivable opportunity. But here his interest was apt to end. Vital points of our administrative detail,

such as the sufficiency of wash-hand basins or of pupil teachers, offered no attractions to him whatever. He preferred Dante and other wholly unofficial seërs. The result was that, as an administrator, Butler fell short of success. None the less for that many of his colleagues delighted in breaking a literary lance with him. Among such were F. T. Palgrave and W. J. Courthope, and our deeply lamented Sidney Joyce, the Charles Lamb of the Office.

After some seventeen years Butler could stand it no longer, and sought a less uncongenial occupation. We were sorry enough to lose him. Anyway, his sedentary life had not impaired his vigour, as anyone will testify who ever walked with (or after) him on Alpine heights.

Reconstructing the portrait from many hints, I see the A. J. B. of this time as a good-looking, clean-limbed, and entirely clean-hearted young man; full of zest in life, but a trifle "viewy" and highly disputatious; with a monocle, and something more than a touch of the Trinity ὕβρις: and if anyone demand what precisely I mean by this he shall have, in lieu of definition, an anecdote. A young friend of mine, a Wykehamist, was once set to read the late Mr. A. W. Kinglake's

Eöthen for a holiday task. At the end of the holidays he confessed to me that he had read but a dozen pages and knew nothing about the book except that "the man came from Trinity College, Cambridge." "Well, and so he did," said I; "though I don't recall the passage yielding that information." "Nor I," said he. "I have only read twelve pages; but I hadn't read three before I'd have bet five to one on *that*." Now this anecdote conveys, under show of *malice*, a sincere tribute; and Cambridge men (Trinity men included) will understand just what is meant when I add an extract from A. J. B.'s diary as a pendant:

Oct. 1, '86.—W. H. Thompson, Master of Trinity, died. A typical Cambridge man: fastidious, accurate, intolerant of slovenly word, thought, or work: a Greek Professor who published nothing but one dialogue of Plato: critical rather than constructive. A few such men are indispensable, but one cannot live on salt.

I have used the word "viewy." A. J. B.—constant as ever to family ties—at once, on coming to London, took up his residence with his equally

constant Aunt Lizzie (Miss Barnett) at 6 Onslow Square, S.W. ; but he had, during the latter part of his Cambridge career, opened his mind to a Liberalism which perturbed his parents. As early as 1865 Arthur had joined the since famous society of Cambridge "Apostles." His father wrote (Dec. 5th) :

I honestly own that, when I first heard of it, *διάνδιχα μερμήριξα*. Yet, after some thought, the balance of my feelings is on the affirmative or approving side. There is no doubt that by joining them you get the benefit of a strong traditional intellectual atmosphere—which in some respects is exactly what I wanted for you, and which—as it seems, as Trinity now is—it is hard to find elsewhere. Also you become linked with a number of amiable brethren who, according to my experience, are always ready to back up one another, and have, moreover, from the position of many of them, a good opportunity of doing so. But you will easily believe, my precious child, that to my mind all this would be dearly bought if you were induced to give in exchange (as too many have given) simplicity—naturalness of mind and manner—and, above all, that sweet firm Faith in your early training, and in definite theological Truth, which it has been the joy of all those who

have loved you the best and longest to see abiding in you. I know, and you know, that the tendency of the *mass* of intellectual men, just now, is like that of the philosophers whom Gibbon describes—to think "all religion equally false," which is only another form of thinking them all equally true. There is something very "exalting" to some minds in standing outside of all religions, and looking down contemptuously and with pitying criticism upon "the humbled insects." But that will only hold good for a few years in the hey-day of youth and hope: and there is—depend upon it—a terrible retribution not far off in the famine of the heart in after years, when this has past away and nothing is left to supply it.

Some words in the above may raise a smile: but the understanding reader will rather detect its pathos—the fallacy of dread in a parent that having taken infinite pains and spared no expense to give his son the best liberal education to be had in England, if not in the world, that son shall, after all, grow up to think for himself.

The claim to this right, so cheerfully insisted on by A. J. B., obviously raised heart-burnings in the vicarage at home. Friends were consulted, and under date May 8, 1872, we find Dr. Liddon

writing to Miss Barnett from Christ Church, Oxford :

I am very glad that Arthur is living with you, and that you are able to talk freely with him about his opinions. A young man generally makes a " grand tour " of the world of opinion, at any rate in political and social matters, before he finally settles down. If he fears God, and tries to keep out of moral evil and says his prayers, he may profess some eccentricities, but he will come to be all right in the end. It is a great thing to be tender and—so far as possible—patient with him while he throws his intellectual limbs about. He has yet to find out that there are many truths and considerations which have to be taken into account, but of which he has not thought ; and if he is not sent to Coventry (I do not mean that you are likely to send A. there) he will do justice to them in time. The Commune[1] itself embodies some true and good principles amid a mass of selfishness and brutality, and it is the former which have laid hold on A.'s mind. He will find that, to be really respected, these principles must be upheld by some more worthy system.

We did not talk very much yesterday, except about some few social and University questions.

[1] A. J. B. ran over to Paris in 1871 for three days, when the Tuileries was still smoking. Also he had made friends with a French Communist in London—a bookbinder—in whose views he took a keen interest.

In the present state of minds at the Universities it is a great thing if a man continues to fear—and to try to love—God. The heathenism which has set in with the University Reform movement is far worse than any aberrations in politics, and I shall be very glad if Arthur marries early and finds in the duties of home life some practical arguments against the speculative rubbish to which he is probably exposed at Cambridge. Meanwhile he is in very good hands, and I hope that before long I may see more of him. I am, my dear Miss Barnett,

Very truly yours,
H. P. Liddon.

This letter, admirably calculated to soothe the perturbations of a maiden aunt, may or may not have been passed on to Arthur by Miss Barnett. At all events he continued to think for himself. The trouble was not his peculiarly, but a malady most incident to honest, thoughtful young men of that time, as all readers of *Tom Brown at Oxford* will remember; and with Arthur it had a great deal more to do with politics than with religion. He stood in no danger, I believe, either then or at any time of his life, of ceasing to fear or to love God: and if his elders insisted on

confusing political Liberalism with irreligion, why then it was (as it always will be) so much the worse for the elders. A. J. B. had become a Liberal in politics, and a Liberal he remained to the last. To the last he kept up a fierce particular hatred of "Jingoism" as personified in Disraeli and Disraeli's successors, and the entry in his diary recording Disraeli's death is implacable:

April 19, '81.—Benjamin Disraeli died at 4.30 A.M., aged 76. Probably no man of our time did more harm to English politics; rather, I think, from a cynical contempt for all English ways of thought than from any bad disposition. He was probably a Jew, or rather a pagan, at heart to the end of his days, and far more Asiatic than European. He died with one hand clasped by two peers whom he had created, and the other held by a quack doctor. . . . His last intelligible words were, "I am overwhelmed."

His liberalism, however, was a habit of mind, not a faggot of opinions, out of which if one were taken the whole dropped to pieces. It was consistent with reverence for the past and for all things Catholic; and indeed his mind saw it based on such reverence. It was consistent

with the devoutest churchmanship. It was consistent, above all, with a noble courtesy in action and in defence of his principles. I will illustrate this (although my narrative has already run too far ahead of chronology) by two extracts relating to the Cambridge (University) election of 1882, when Professor Stuart, Liberal, in a forlorn hope, opposed Mr. Cecil Raikes, the Conservative candidate. A. J. B. helped Stuart's candidature while refusing—for reasons that will appear—to join his Committee.

Diary, Nov. 1882.—Cambridge election has been the chief business this week. Polling began on Thursday. By Saturday Raikes was 400 or so ahead of Stuart. Of course there are a few who only see one point clearly, and therefore vote for the man who is supposed to agree with them on that one. But mostly it is sheer asininity or hatred of "that d——d intellect." *Nov.* 28.—Poll at Cambridge closed. Raikes 3491, Stuart 1301.

Letter to A. J. B. from his Mother, Nov. 27th.—I hope that you are not disappointed albeit *sorry* that your man is not in. I must tell you that both Father and I quite guessed why your name was not on Mr. Stuart's Committee before we

heard it for certain, and we felt that it was like our own old Boy. But Father said directly that, had he known how it would be, he would not have given his name to be put on Mr. Raikes' list, because "it is fair that the young ones should have a chance."

The story seems to me equally creditable to the independence and to the filial delicacy of a man who has passed his thirty-eighth birthday.

Among the houses where Butler found a welcome in London was that of his father's old friend, the Rev. William Gilson Humphry,[1] Vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, by Trafalgar Square. In January 1872, at a little Christmas dance at St. Martin's Vicarage, Arthur Butler and his brother—the first two guests to arrive—were received at the door of the room by Mrs. Humphry, her eldest daughter, aged eighteen, standing by in her first white ball-dress. Two younger sisters sat in the background, looking on; and of these

[1] William Gilson Humphry had been Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Chancellor's Medallist. He took Orders and was resident chaplain to Bishop Blomfield, who gave him the living of Northolt in Middlesex. In 1856 he became Vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Charing Cross, and held this cure until his death in 1886. He married Caroline Maria D'Oyly, only daughter of Dr. D'Oyly, rector of Lambeth and Sundridge, and joint-editor of D'Oyly and Mant's *Commentary of the Bible*.

one (Mary Caroline), aged sixteen-and-a-half, remarked to her junior, "Is it not extraordinary to think that one of us might marry one of those two men?" It was an idle thought, not recalled until long after. The young Cambridge don and the young girl in the background made scarcely an acquaintance that evening.

The next summer Mr. Humphry and his family were invited to spend their holiday at Lockinge House, Berkshire, to be company for his old friend and parishioner Lord Overstone (then aged seventy-seven), whose son-in-law and daughter (then Colonel and Mrs. Loyd Lindsay) had gone abroad.

I give the rest of the narrative as it has been communicated to me:

The day after we arrived at Lockinge, Mr. Butler, Vicar of Wantage (two miles off), drove himself over in his pony-carriage to inspect the Lockinge schools and came to luncheon with us. It was the first time we girls had ever seen him, and he fixed his eye-glass firmly in his eye and inspected us thoroughly. He was delighted at meeting his old college friend, and he always made

much of girls ; and his one regret was that we should just miss getting to know his daughters, who nearly matched us in age—as he and his family were starting for their holiday abroad in two days' time. The only thing to be done was for him to make my mother promise to come to tea that very afternoon ; and he went off. When my mother and sister drove over a little later to Wantage Vicarage it was to find that an accident had happened. Mr. Butler's pony had run away and he had been thrown out of the carriage and badly hurt. The only thing he could say and kept repeating after he was picked up was, " Mrs. Humphry is coming to tea, Mrs. Humphry is coming to tea." His back was injured, and he had to stay in bed for many weeks. Of course the holiday was given up, and this seeming mischance brought about a close intimacy between our two families. Lord Overstone invited the Miss Butlers to come and stay at Lockinge, and great was the fun and many were the gallops we had together over the Berkshire downs on any suitable steeds that could be found. There was much conversation about the beloved and brilliant brother Arthur, but he did not appear upon the scenes at that time, being I think slightly bored at the prospect of meeting a party of girls. Moreover he grew his beard first that summer. It was in the autumn of 1873 that his visits to St.

Martin's Vicarage became frequent, and we met often at the Saturday Popular Concerts at St. James' Hall and used to walk back to Onslow Square (where he lived with Miss Barnett) when his sisters were staying there. My sisters and I had no brothers, and our parents wished us to go in for the Cambridge Local Examinations, which were a novelty in those days for girls educated at home. We passed successfully; and I won a Scholarship at Bedford College (1873), which, however, I did not take up. All this interested Arthur: and I remember his surprise at finding I had already read the three parts of the *Divina Commedia* in Italian. Dances and chance meetings brought closer intimacy, and we became engaged February 8, 1874.

They were married on April 6, 1875,[1] at St. Martin's Church; and so A. J. B. entered into a good fortune of which, as it lasted to the end of his life, to the end it was his first and happiest and most constant service to show himself worthy. In February 1874, on the morrow of his betrothal, he had written:

I feel rather like Polycrates:[2] but nowadays one is not allowed to choose what one will throw

[1] A wedding cake, in accordance with tradition, was duly sent to the High Table at Trinity.

[2] Herodotus iii. 40.

away—so that one can only fall back upon *In all time of our wealth . . .*

And in later days, when I knew him, his sense of human affection remained so fresh, almost so boyish, that his voice shook in reading these lines (of an unknown Elizabethan) :

O Love, they wrong thee much
That say thy sweet is bitter,
When thy rich fruit is such
As nothing can be sweeter.
Fair house of joy and bliss,
Where truest treasure is,
I do adore thee :
I know thee what thou art,
I serve thee with my heart,
And fall before thee.

The engagement had been a great happiness to both families ; and Miss Barnett as usual played the fairy godmother to her nephew and godson, not only by making him in part her heir during her lifetime, but by turning out of 6 Onslow Square and leaving the newly married couple the greater part of the furniture, books, pictures,

china, etc.[1] Here A. J. B.'s first child (Frances Mary) was born, on January 29, 1876—his mother's birthday; and here, in the small garden at the back, repose the bones of Tilburina, the faithful and the beautiful.

The society in South Kensington was friendly as well as intellectual in those days—the early days of the Bach Choir, to which young Mrs. Butler belonged; the days when Mme. Goldschmidt—Jenny Lind—took the sopranos and altos for private practice in her own house, and warbled still inimitable notes from her beautiful throat; and Butler returned from his daily drudgery in Whitehall to a *milieu* in which his heart could be well content. Just here I happen, in his diary, upon a laconic entry :—

Jan. 10, 1876.—Began to translate *Purg.*

His translation of *The Purgatory* (published in 1880) was cast in literal prose of set purpose, to continue Carlyle's work, Dr. Carlyle's consent having been asked and accorded; but I think he must have, then or later, dallied with other

[1] She went to live at Wantage, and died there in 1900.

temptations. At any rate I find among his undated papers this rendering of *Purg.* xxvii. 94–109 :—

It was the hour, I think, when on the mount
First from the Orient Cytherea beam'd,
Who ever seems with fire of love aflame,
That in my dreams methought a dame I saw
Youthful and fair, who went about a land
And gather'd flowers, and in her song she said—
"Whoso my name enquireth, let him know
'Tis Leah, and as I go I move around
These my fair hands to twine myself a wreath.
For pleasure at the glass I deck myself :
But never doth my sister Rachel stir
Forth from her mirror, but sits all the day.
She to behold her own fair eyes is fain
As I to deck myself with these my hands :
Her to contemplate pleaseth, me to work."

Of this task which, at the first a *πάρεργον*, extended itself and absorbed so much of labour and enthusiasm that in the end it became the branch of scholarship in which he will be remembered, more shall be said by and by.

The lease of 6 Onslow Square came to an end in 1879, and the Butlers moved to Wood End,

Weybridge, a permanent home with a garden in which A. J. B. constantly delighted. Here a friend—especially a Cambridge friend—was always welcome: here he would entertain a guest with intimate and accurate information on the properties of the Bagshot gravel: here, in an atmosphere of constant affection, his children were born and grew up, trained always to fear God, love their fellow creatures (even the dumb ones) and value the things of the mind. The children were seven, and their names in order: Frances Mary, Grace Ellen, William Martin, Margaret Dorothy, Rhoda, Rachel Elizabeth, Mary Caroline.

Here, too, in June 1879, on his thirty-fifth birthday, he wrote:

Come fa l' uom che, in alti gioghi andando
Freddo ed infermo e stanco più non osa
Indugiar ni salir, ed ogni cosa
Gli da paura
Se forse al sommo vien, onde guardando
La casa sua
Alfin, s'affretta in qui e non si posa,
Ma va cogli occhi 'l diletto ostel cercando:
Così fa io; or con amor ardente
Tu mi riscaldi, e con speme gradita

Mi ferma il cuore, e con fede valente
Mia debolezza Signor caro aita ;
Perche oggi giunto son lasso e dolente
Al mezzo del cammin della mia vita.

Under date " March 22, '80," occurs an entry relating to his translation of the *Purgatorio :*

Took *errata* to Macmillan. So ends four years' work. *Prosit !*

But there is an intermediate one :

Jan. 15, '79.—Dined Macmillans at Tooting. They are friendly folk, but I wish the old fellow would take a more cheerful view of *Purg.* H[enry] J[ackson] thinks it will do, and advises an attempt on the Pitt Press.

The book—*The Purgatory of Dante : A Prose Translation with Notes*—appeared in 1880.

Oct. 8, '87.—*Purg.* has at last paid its expenses and cleared £17, 12*s.*, of which half comes to me !

It reached a second edition in 1892.

The conciseness of the notes and its unpretending form may well, to anyone who opens this little book nowadays, make it incredible that here was something in its way revolutionary. " Before 1880," writes Sir Frederick Pollock, " unless

my memory and the catalogue of the London Library are both at fault, the English reader had practically to take his choice between the commentaries of Bianchi and Fraticelli. Philalethes was there, certainly ; but the English students who could use elaborate German notes with ease were fewer than they are now. Whether original or not, Butler's work was pioneer work in England."

The Paradise of Dante followed in 1885 (2nd edition, 1891), and *The Hell of Dante* in 1892 ; *A Companion to Dante* (translated from the German of J. A. Scartazzini) in 1893 ; *Dante, His Times and his Work*, a popular book, in 1895 (2nd edition, 1897) ; and *The Forerunners of Dante*, posthumously, in 1910. To appreciate these works, even after studying them carefully, one has to remember that, when Butler began, the study of Dante was a mere recreation for cultivated men. If, as some of us believe, a sense of medieval literature must in time become as necessary a part of humane education as a sense of Homer and of Virgil, then to Butler will be due no small share of the praise, and I am writing of a man who will some day inherit his own.

But my own knowledge is slight here; its arrested infancy dating, almost exactly, from the time when Butler published his first book: and I give place here to an eminent scholar, Dr. Paget Toynbee:

Of Butler's work upon Dante, so far at least as regards the serious study of the poet in England, it is hardly too much to say that it was "epoch-making." At the time of the publication (in 1880) of his first volume, the translation of the *Purgatorio*, the impulse given to the study of Dante by the celebration of the sixth centenary (1865) of the poet's birth, which gave rise to a plentiful crop of translations of the *Divina Commedia* in this country and in America, had almost died away. Most English students of Dante still confined themselves to the *Inferno*, partly no doubt on account of the supposed superior interest of the narrative of the first division of the poem, which is more dramatic and more "sensational" than that of the *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*, and partly, it may be supposed, owing to the fact of the existence in an easily accessible form (as a volume of the well-known Bohn series) of the admirable prose translation of the *Inferno* by Dr. John Carlyle, and to the lack of similar facilities in the case of the other two *Cantiche*. By the publication of his prose translation of the *Purgatorio*, accompanied by the

text of the original, and English notes, Butler invited the student on easy terms to enlarge his horizon, and venture on the exploration of a region outside the conventional limits of the *Inferno*. The response may not have been large at the outset—not at any rate from the publishers' point of view—but the door was opened, and the result was sufficiently encouraging to lead to the issue five years later (1885) of a companion volume comprising the *Paradiso*, which in its turn was followed, after an interval of seven years, by the *Inferno* (1892), thus completing the work and furnishing for the first time an adequate English prose translation into notes of the whole of the *Commedia*.[1] The steadily growing appreciation of an ever widening circle of readers was testified to by the demand, within a few months of the publication of the last instalment, for new editions both of the *Purgatorio* (1892) and *Paradiso* (1891).

The motive which led Butler to undertake his translation and commentary of Dante's poem is explained in the preface to the original edition of

[1] A prose translation, it is true, was already in existence: but this, as Butler observes, while professing to render the whole poem, does not go beyond profession, for the performance is of the poorest. The author of this version (for the most part a feeble paraphrase), which was published in 1852, was the Rev. E. O'Donnell, whose exaggerated estimate of his own work may be gathered from his claim in the preface "that no translator has ever done more justice to the author than I have in every respect."

his *Purgatory*. After quoting the following remark from Sainte-Beuve's review of Mesnard's translation of the *Inferno* in the *Causeries de Lundi* (Dec. 11, 1854): "*Lire Dante et le lire de près, c'est presque inévitablement désirer de le traduire, c'est entrer dans les replis de son génie, et après y avoir pénétré* (*ce qui demande tout un effort*), *c'est conçevoir la pensée d'y introduire les autres*," he says: "Without pretending to the hardihood, so characteristic of the writer's nation, which talks easily of penetrating into the recesses of Dante's genius, the present translator may admit that some such idea as that indicated by Sainte-Beuve was what first suggested the task he has undertaken." Butler himself did not rank his translation above the level of "a crib, pure and simple"; he made no pretension to literary graces; and it must be confessed that his version sometimes strikes the reader as needlessly bald: but the success of his experiment on the whole, as regards text, translation, and notes, especially the last, which were recognised at once as bearing the distinctive mark of ripe scholarship, amply justified his attempt to make Dante accessible in a "classical" edition to those who were willing to be taken by the hand and to be led 'dentro alle segrete cose" of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, to be introduced, that is, to the beauties and mysteries of the two upper realms, as well as to the horrors and pathos of the *Inferno*.

A characteristic feature of his notes, which it may not be out of place to mention here, was his acute appreciation (as befitted a member of the Alpine Club) of the evidence afforded by sundry hints in the poem of Dante's experiences as a climber. Thus, when the latter, who was "blown" after a stiff climb over rocks, says that he kept talking as he went, so as not to appear "done" (*Inferno*, xxiv. 64), Butler observes: "A human touch. Few climbers have not done the same." Again, he detects "an accurate bit of mountaineering practice" in a detail of Dante's description of his climb out of hell (*Inferno*, xxxiv. 86): "Virgil, like a careful guide, gets his traveller safely on to a ledge, and then follows."

Butler did good service in insisting on the importance of the *Divine Comedy* as a subject of study, over and above its purely æsthetic merits, as part of the general scheme of liberal education. "It is not too much to say," he writes in the above-mentioned preface, "that there is no one work of human genius which can equal it as an instrument of education, intellectual and moral. . . . It is the summary of all the thought and speculation, the record of all the action of the thirteenth century: the age which of all whose memory remains to us produced the greatest number of great men. This was the age of Frederick II, Lewis IX, Simon of Montfort, Thomas Aquinas,

Roger Bacon ; the age which saw the revival of painting in Cimabue and Giotto, of sculpture in Nicholas ; while Amiens and Westminster, the Old Palace of Florence and the Holy Field of Pisa, are living evidence of what it could do in the noblest of all the arts. It was to such an age as this that Dante's poem first gave a voice ; and he who would appreciate the poem, must first have made himself in some degree familiar with the age." Again, in his preface to the *Hell:* "Dante fills the stream of human history from side to side. There have been greater poets, one or two ; there have been greater thinkers, greater men of affairs ; but of no other poet can it be said that he was the greatest political thinker of his age ; of no other philosopher or theologian that he was its greatest poet. Nor have poets as a rule taken a very high place in science or philosophers in scholarship ; yet in these subjects Dante was among the first men of his age. His acquaintance with all accessible literature and his grasp of all attainable scientific knowledge were equally complete." "We need not despair," he adds later, "of seeing Dante one day take his place beside (but not instead of) Homer and Virgil in the curriculum of our schools and universities"—a consummation devoutly to be wished, and one that, whenever it is brought about, as assuredly sooner or later it must be, will have been hastened

in no small degree by the devoted labours of Butler himself.

At a time when scepticism in all matters Dantesque had become the fashion, especially with a certain school of critics in Italy, Butler uttered a much needed word of protest against the lengths to which it was being carried. He encouraged a healthy questioning of accepted *data*, but within limits; scepticism, he urged, should "confine itself to its proper domains, and not extend its borders until it includes negative dogmatism." It is interesting to note in this connection that he was, from early days, a firm believer in the authenticity of the treatise *De Aqua et Terra*, now, thanks to the critical labours of Dr. Moore and Dr. Shadwell, happily vindicated as a genuine work of Dante against the "blind unbelief" of sundry continental scholars. Nor was he on the side of the sceptics on the Beatrice question, the shibboleth which divides, or did divide, Dantists into two distinct camps. He had no sympathy with those who disbelieve in the existence of a real Beatrice and choose to regard the whole story of Dante's love as purely allegorical.

He was most refreshingly impatient of the perversities and pedantries of the Dante commentators. "There is no end to wondering over their vagaries," he wrote to the present writer

in 1888; "it would be rather sport to bring out a Canto or two with a complete collection of all the absurdities that have been *débités* over them."

Besides his three volumes on the *Divina Commedia*, which constitute his chief claim to the gratitude of Dante students, Butler published (anonymously) in 1900 a revised text of the poem, the last book we believe issued, before their dissolution, by the firm of Rivingtons, with which he had been connected for some years. In 1893 there appeared a translation from his hand, under the title of *A Companion to Dante*, of Scartazzini's *Dante-Handbuch*, in which, while giving due credit to the author for his valuable work, he felt constrained to call attention (in an occasional footnote) to the more remarkable instances of his misplaced ingenuity, the effect of which, as the translator observed, is less to convince the reader than to rouse him to opposition. Two years later he published a useful *œuvre de vulgarisation* in the shape of a book entitled *Dante: His Times and His Work*, which was mainly a reprint of papers which he had contributed to the *Monthly Packet* and the *Magazine of the Home Reading Union* during the previous year. In 1902, with what some of his friends thought mistaken generosity, he introduced to the English public a book with a very similar title

(*Dante and his Time*) by Karl Federn, an English translation, by the German author, of a work (hardly, it must be said, worthy of Butler's sponsorship) which had already appeared in its native dress.

Butler's latest contributions to Dante literature appeared posthumously. These were a volume of selections, with notes, from Italian poets before 1300, entitled *The Forerunners of Dante* (an apparently unconscious adaptation of the title, *I Precursori di Dante*, of an Italian book by A. D'Ancona on a different subject), a laborious piece of work upon which he had been engaged for several years, and the article on Dante in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; both of which were published in 1910, the year of his death.

Not the least valuable of his services to Dante students were his periodical reviews of English and foreign books and articles upon Dante through a long series of years in the columns of the *Athenæum*.

He at one time projected, and made some progress with, a translation of Dante's prose treatise, the *Convivio*, but eventually abandoned the task, owing partly to the corrupt state of portions of the original text, partly to the pressure of other work.

Butler's literary activity was not confined, even in the years covered by this chapter, to translating and annotating Dante. On his coming to London his Cambridge friend, Norman MacColl, editor of *The Athenæum*, had invited him to do some occasional reviewing for that paper; and his connection with it lasted from 1870 even to 1908—that is to say, under two editors, the second of whom, Mr. Vernon Rendall, supplies me with the following notes:

It is a pleasure to me to write about Butler's *Athenæum* work, which was never advertised for the public gaze, as is the fashion nowadays. "The paper, apart from Mr. Watts-Dunton and one or two men who are given a free hand, is written by safe nonentities."—Years ago I remember reading and smiling at some such statement as this concerning *The Athenæum*. Butler was not a nonentity, and he was not particularly "safe" in days when the dignity of literature and language were regarded as of importance. Singularly correct in detail, he was not at all academic; he was a specialist without the specialist's heavy style and indifference to life. MacColl, his contemporary at Cambridge and his friend and editor for many years, did not

like slang, though he enjoyed a touch of humour. Both wrote excellent English, but Butler, like Andrew Lang, was fond of an occasional touch of the vernacular, which, indeed, like the jokes in Stubbs's *Constitutional History*, was the more effective for its setting. Butler occasionally tried to be outrageous, to see how far the editor would go, and I remember discussions with MacColl as to whether such and such a phrase of his—in inverted commas, of course—should be retained. Generally it was, and added to the humanity of the paper.

Butler reviewed a great deal of solid matter from 1870 onwards, writing on memoirs ; history, especially of the Italian sort ; and the frequent and occasionally irritating products which are classed as educational literature. His thorough criticisms were paid for in earlier days at a price that would astonish an accomplished reviewer to-day. He was always great on detail, and never content with the showy summary which relies largely on the Preface of the book treated, and attacks with brilliant confidence the commonplaces of the subject. On mountaineering, classical translations, Eton, Cambridge, Dante, he said his say often. In 1895 he sparred with the *Athenæum* reviewer of *Dante : His Times and His Work*, maintaining his faith in a real Beatrice, and this the Beatrice Portinari of Boccaccio.

Besides all this solid matter he reviewed a multitude of novels, from Hardy to Ouida; and scattered through *The Athenæum* are a host of wise and ironical *obiter dicta* concerning the art and practice of fiction. He notes, for instance, that the archdeacon of novelists is a polished and cynical man of the world; that they project modern culture into a semi-civilised past; and that historical romances commonly fail by being too historical. An unusually wide range of scholarship and general knowledge, a zeal for accuracy, and a ready and easy vein of humour were, as Butler's friends would expect, his chief qualities as a reviewer. He hated public indulgence in personalities, the fierce light that beats from the cheaper press on everybody who is eminent or prominent. Perhaps I can best exhibit his style by a few sentences from his reviewing, but I ought to add that he never scamped his work, and that his verdict was not contested in any of the reviews which I have examined.

He began chiefly with classical translations, including a gentleman who changed Aeneas to "Aeneius" in order to make him rhyme (more or less) with "pious." He noticed the versions of Theocritus by Calverley and Lang, and many of less mark. One of these suggested the idea that "among translators the works of ancient authors

were what peaks and passes are to the Alpine Club, things to be 'done' without any further object." The fuss made about peak-climbing was derided in several articles. Butler records that a noted climber had ascended the Matterhorn without using his hands, and in the same review makes the characteristic comment: "'Alpine Club' should never be used in an English book (even a translation) to denote any but the English club, which alone has a right to the name without any qualifying prefix."

Dealing with English travel, Butler disposes of amateur comments about Surrey antiquities, and recalls the remark of Jennings about "the fearful man on the bicycle."

Lord Avebury's *Pleasures of Life* (1887) suggests the remark that the address on "The Choice of Books," innocent in itself, was the means of opening the floodgates to a wondrous stream of nonsense and self-advertisement. Reviewing the "Memoir" of Henry Sidgwick, he does full justice to that admirable man and philosopher who, when he took to politics, "like the spirits in Dante, had a better view of the remote than of the immediate future." Noticing together two accounts of Italian History by a fluent don, he points out numerous mistakes, and demands a standard of knowledge which would depress many a promising devotee of Clio.

The historian is "to show a familiarity with the events he treats of equal to the attentive newspaper reader's grasp of the present." The review of *Early Italian Love-Stories* deals, naturally, with those used by Shakespeare, and the character in "Bandello" who corresponds to Don John in "Much Ado" is denounced as "a cad who in any other country in Europe would have been kicked out of decent Society." Butler evidently enjoyed noticing the grumbles at large which Ouida called "Views and Opinions." He reduces her frenzied veneration for all that is antique by pointing out that "the black gondola—nay, any gondola—was an innovation in its day; and probably the Ouidas of the period slanged the municipality of Arpinum for allowing these hideous machines to supersede the neat coracle." Ouida promised some "Pensées éparses," and gave a specimen six lines long in which the relentless reviewer discovered two wrong accents, one false concord, and one error in syntax.

When he had in his last days given up most of his *Athenæum* reviewing, he still read the paper carefully, and sent queries as to the correctness of this or that. To have a critic of such range and such good humour was a real benefit. Like all precise men, Butler delighted in the outrageous misprint, though I may add that his examples did not come from the *Athenæum*.

He and his editors found a genuine and lasting pleasure in personal association apart from "shop" and the thorny chair of office. The point would seem obvious, but it is, perhaps, worth mentioning at a time when such relations are considered useless or even deprecated.

I am conscious that this chapter, or the latter part of it, has been occupied somewhat disproportionately with Butler's desk-work. For the way to get him at his best, and at his most characteristic, was to approach him with Wordsworth's exhortation—

> Up, up, my friend, and quit your book!

—an exhortation to which he ever responded with alacrity, even with glee. He was, indeed —as a friend afterwards described him—"one of those men who affect the world more through their influences upon their friends than through their writings." He was a good man to watch in his home; a good man to take you about his garden; the best man in the world to walk with in his favourite weather, a fine December day—

"to my thinking the most perfect kind of day that we get in England—the colours at once brighter

and softer than you get at any other time of year, the air perfectly clear, and the sun quite as strong as you want for walking."

On such a day you felt the man and the weather to be one, his mask of austerity softened and suffused by a sunny interest in all creatures and a sunny sense of the beauty and nobility of life: and this sense would play at such times upon everything, from the Holy Roman Empire down to a cyclamen or a winter aconite, so that I used to charge him with resembling the ungodly in the Book of Wisdom, in that he let no flower of the field pass by him. He loved the walk the better if it led to the house of a friend, and was interested if the *deus terminus* happened to be an interesting stranger. In the diary, under date April 5, '91, I find a note of such a call upon Tennyson:

Went with D. W. F. to Farringford. Found the great man about to start, and walked for nearly two hours with him (Wilfrid Ward of the party). He was very friendly. "Why did Hutton quote M. Arnold's version of the camp-fire scene? It is not good. Now mine is beautiful." Quoted Catullus at length, &c., &c.

On board a yacht he would skin his hands with hauling upon the fore-sheet, and religiously smoke more than was good for him in the zest of the game. But it was rather an Alp than a deck that he trod with the security of an expert ; and, to redress the balance of Dante and *The Athenæum*, the Alps and what he did on them shall have a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER VI

Alpine and Other Tramps

As we have seen, the manse of Wantage usually took its holiday abroad: in Switzerland by preference, and, as time went on, in the remoter Alpine ranges. The Butlers, indeed, would seem to have held the *table d'hôte* in equal abhorrence with its frequenter, the sturdy, record-breaking British climber.

> But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!

Their dislike may have been fastidious to excess, but I find it intelligible: and I note that, as these twin bores extend their area of occupation, the family's holiday correspondence crosses the frontier of Switzerland proper and tends to be dated from fastnesses deep and yet deeper in Tirol.

The boy A. J. B., tutored in climbing by

Riddell, his beloved "Professor," probably became a mountaineer without quite knowing how. He grew to be a peculiarly expert one, with two strong idiosyncrasies for which the reader will not be unprepared.

(1) He despised "peak-bagging"—that is to say, the notching of so many "first ascents," on which certain climbers vaingloriously boast themselves. He coldly classed this with professional athletics and pot-hunting. If, for the sake of dialectic, you pointed out that anyhow to conquer a virgin summit (apart from the subsequent boasting) was an ambition presumably more disinterested than that of collaring a piece of plate in a hundred-yards' sprint, he was apt to answer that he declined to be interested in a line of disinterestedness drawn between two things in themselves uninteresting.

(2) He loved these excursions not only for the play they put on the muscles of a stringy man, and their calls on the mind to court and face danger for the fun of it, yet warily, but because they led him, plump and unexpected, into all sorts of habitations of strange men going about

their familiar daily business. Πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω—I have never known a man with a better sense of *Europe* than Butler had. Of the late Lord Acton, whom he met in 1896, he records in a familiar letter, ". . . a most delightful man, though one feels a little awed by his knowledge of past and *present* history. He has known personally every man who has known anything for the last forty years": and of course Lord Acton's genius for vitalising an immense knowledge of the past with a curiosity for all that was eminent in the world in his own day has passed into a byword. But A. J. B. was curious about *all* sorts and conditions of men. I will not say, as Mr. Birrell says of Burke, that "he knew how the whole world lived"; but he had a passion to know how honest men lived in every nation; and a cobbler in a chance valley of the Oetzthal would be meat and drink to him and keep him chatting by the hour.

By the simplest of paradoxes, then, Butler—despising "first ascents," climbing in the remoter Alps for the fun of it and because they were remote—casually put quite a respectable number

of first ascents to what he would have damned as his "credit." He has summarised, in *The Alpine Journal*, under the title of "Some Undesigned New Routes," a bag of three which (owing to fog and other mishaps) he made in 1890: two in the Oetzthal and one in the Adamello group—this last in company with his old comrade, Rev. T. H. A. Houblon. Of the first he tells merely that he wandered in a mist "till we found ourselves on the top of something." By-and-by the fog lifted and the peak they had started for hove into sight, a quarter of a mile away. "It became clear that we had strayed to the top of the highest and most northerly of the Hennesiegelköpfe. When we got back, Praximarer [the landlord]—who is probably as good an authority on the subject as anyone—said that he knew of no previous ascent, *nor can I conceive any reason why there should have been one.*"

Mr. A. J. Mumm (*Quis terra non novit . . .?*) sends me the following note:

Butler did not become a member of the Alpine Club until December 1886, when most of his climbing had been done; but he was already

known as a mountaineer, and in 1890 he became Editor of the *Alpine Journal*. He was Editor for four years (1890–93 inclusive, vols. xv. and xvi.). His own view of himself as a mountaineer is given in a characteristic "Prefatory Note" prefixed to vol. xv. on his taking over the editorship. It was probably by virtue of his position as Editor that he became a member of the A.D.C. (Alpine Dining Club), a small body consisting mainly, though not exclusively, of past and present officers of the Club who, almost since the first days of the Club, have dined together—in numbers averaging about twelve or fourteen, but occasionally rising to twenty-five and more—before the Monthly Meetings. Butler was one of the most regular attendants at these dinners, almost to the end. They are light-hearted, informal gatherings, and no one entered into the spirit of them more heartily than he.

In the above-mentioned "Prefatory Note" he tells us that "to him, from various causes, the 'centres' are almost totally unknown. His acquaintance with the chain of Mont Blanc is founded on dim schoolboy recollections of a walk round the lower *cols* in days when the Alpine Club itself did not exist; Zermatt he has not seen for nearly a quarter of a century, while Grindelwald remains to him merely a place on the map." He was not a man to whom the

attractions of "centres" made any appeal. What he enjoyed was the exploration of little-known, out-of-the-way districts, and he gratified this taste by devoting himself, year after year, to the peaks and passes of the Oetzthal Alps. Of these in the 'eighties he possessed a knowledge which was shared by few, if any, other mountaineers—certainly by no other Englishman. He first visited them in 1874, when he climbed the Wildspitze, the monarch of the region, and made a new route up the Similaun. The next trace of him that I have come across is in the record of "New Expeditions" in 1880 [*Alpine Journal*, x. 104], when he made the first travellers' passage of the Oberettenjoch with the Rev. T. H. Archer Houblon. In 1881 and 1882 he crossed some little-known passes, about which he sent some "Notes on the Eastern Alps" to the *Journal* [xi. 123–4]: and some further notes by him appear in 1884 as "Hints on the Eastern Alps, &c."

He figures again in the list of "New Expeditions" in 1886, as making a new descent of the Wilde Freiger with (Sir) Frederick Pollock [xiii. 127]: and yet again in 1888 with the first passages of the Kleinbergjochl and the Quelljoch, and the first complete passage of the Similaunjoch. Early in 1889 he read a paper before the Club on "The Oetzthal District," describing

his 1874 climbs and some others, including what was probably the second ascent of the "Grasstaler Grieskogel."

I have endured much, at one time and another, from the reminiscential talk of Alpine climbers; and for its drip of boredom I know nothing harder to endure save the talk of a golfer. But it ever impresses me, and I feel a diffidence in claiming that A. J. B.'s attitude towards an Alpine climb is the only one proper to a grown man. So I content myself with stating the fact that, as often as not, he did an ascent purely for the jest of it and quite in the manner of Mr. Wemmick —"Halloa!" said Mr. Wemmick. "Here's a church. Halloa! Here's Miss Skiffins! Let's have a wedding!" "Halloa!" said A. J. B. "Here's a peak! Let's climb it." His letters treat it all in this casual way. "On Tuesday morning," he writes in 1867, "I took my knapsack and started alone for a three days' walk among the Dolomites." In 1880 he joined his father and mother and sister for a holiday in the beloved Tirol. The Vicar, as his custom was on a holiday, had left his letters to accumulate

at Wantage. In the heap lay one from Mr. Gladstone, offering him a canonry of Worcester, and weeks elapsed before the curates, agitated by a sweating enquiry from Downing Street, turned out the letter and telegraphed its contents. A. J. B., having preceded (in company with Houblon) his parents by a week or two, had been working his muscles up to whipcord by feats upon the Weiss Kugel.

Josef [his pet guide] said he knew of a pass which no tourist had ever crossed. . . . By this time it was blowing and snowing hard, and as we got up to the pass it got worse. We could see hardly anything and had to struggle on as we could. My beard was frozen stiff and decorated with icicles an inch long. Then we got down some rocks, out of the wind and into the sun, and so to Kurzras. In the afternoon a lot of peasants from Meran appeared, and five of them, led by the organist of Unsere Frau, got out some song-books and sang one thing after another extremely well. Wednesday looked no better, so we crossed the Nieder Joch to Fend, again in a cold wind but less snow. At Fend we found a large company, including two very pleasant Americans from Philadelphia. They were in

difficulties for want of a guide ; so we suggested that they should cross the Gepatsch Joch with us. Thursday opened more promisingly, and we reached the Joch with no more difficulty than arose from the incompetence of a man whom we took as porter. He had a cough, and could not go a bit, so that he had to be lugged up the last slope. At the top the snow began to come down merrily, and, soon after, we got into a regular labyrinth of crevasses, through which Josef piloted us with great skill. One of the Americans went through, right over his head, but was got out with no further casualty than the loss of his hat ; though it was a nervous moment when I felt the rope cracking with the strain. On the whole I got the worst of it, for I was next ahead of him : so I lay on the snow while H. and Josef pulled like demons in front of me and nearly squeezed the breath out of my body. After that we got on nicely, and went down the magnificent glacier to the Gepatsch Haus, and did well there : for we got first-rate bottled beer, and we found a guitar and a man who could play it, and Josef sang Tyrolese songs in a voice most ludicrously like ——'s.

This violent gymnastic had to be curbed, of course, when his parents arrived. But it

continued to be strenuous. The ladies travelled from place to place in an *einspanner*; while the Vicar (aged sixty-three) and A. J. B. (carrying the knapsack for both) tramped across the mountains from Oetz to Hulden, Hulden to Sölden, Sölden to Fend, and back. The father writes (Aug. 18th):

Walking with Arthur after an interval of eighteen years makes me feel again like a young man. Only our relative positions are changed, and he takes the lead instead of me; pays, talks, and arranges. . . . I cannot tell you the intense enjoyment which this walk with him has given me. It is most delightful to find how much we sympathise with one another, and how much—in spite of difference of expression—we are at one in the essentials. You may imagine how very many matters we talked out as we walked side by side under the shade of the most glorious larches.

A. J. B. writes home, under the same cover:

As the enclosed will show, we have had a very successful expedition. . . . At Heilig Kreuz, where we looked in for a *viertel*, the parson (a very rough party) asked Father if he was a "Posuit." After some difficulty I saw that he

meant a "Puseyite," and replied "Freilich." There was a tremendous party at Fend: where they all slept is a mystery. The consequence was that when we started at six yesterday morning there was not a scrap of salted meat in the house, and we had to put up with eggs and cheese. We got on very well, however, except that the snow was soft and slippery. . . . By the time we got to Sölden, after ten hours' actual walking, Father had had enough of it, and I was a little afraid that he might be overtired. But he slept well, and is as fresh as paint to-day.

Ten years later he writes again from the same haunts:

Unsere Frau: Aug. 10, 1890.

Here I am again in this sweet spot. Came this morning viâ Hoch-joch, across which I acted as guide to a party of studenten, who passed the night in the Hospiz, as I also did. Yesterday I had an excursion which can only be described as a buster. We started from Gepatsch, intending to cross the perfectly easy Kesselwand Joch. Alois had not been there for six years, nor I for ten: so we made a mess of it, went too far, and found ourselves on the top of tremendously steep snow slopes and a ridge of equally steep rocks, looking over the Hintereis Ferner—*i.e.* two

glaciers south of where we ought to have been.[1] We were neither of us quite sure of our position ; but we knew we had to get down, and down we got—fortunately each in one piece. How often poor Alois said that it was a *verdammte Geschichte* I should be sorry to say, or how often I impressed on him that *es muss gehen*. However, we let each other down in turns, taking two hours to get down perhaps 1000 feet : and after all we solved a problem that had often haunted me, viz. whether a way could be made from the Gepatsch to the Hintereis glacier. . . .

A pretty incident occurred as we came up the Kunenser-thal. I met a nice little girl, of eleven or so, carrying a baby. A few steps further was a rosary lying on the ground. It was hers and I gave it to her. She caught my hand and gave me such a kiss ! A nice clean pretty little girl as ever you saw.

Sölden : Aug. 17, 1890.

Here we[2] are, under the Ortler, on a heavenly day. . . . I do not think I shall come here again ; it is too much of a " centre," though a mild one : perhaps when I am quite old and can only loaf about the meadows, which are lovely.

[1] This was obviously the " undesigned new route " of which particular mention has been made on p. 126.

[2] The " we " again includes the Rev. T. H. A. Houblon.

Mandronhütte der Section Leipzig des
D. v. Oe. A.V.: Aug. 21, 1890.

I think I will begin a letter to you from this elevated spot (8300 feet about). . . . To-morrow, if the weather holds, which just now looks rather doubtful, we shall be up betimes and do the Adamello.

Same place: Aug. 22, 1.45 P.M.

We got off at 5.30. Snow in lovely order. Got to the top of Adamello at 10—I think the grandest view I ever saw. Scarcely a cloud; and every peak from Monte Rosa to the Glockner clearly visible—except Weisskugel and Wildspitze, which was behind the Ortler. But Piz Linard, Buin (I think I made out Cotschen), Fluchthorn, etc., were all to view; likewise Similaun and his brethren. To the South the lake of Garda, and all the plain of Lombardy purple and hazy. I think I will never go up a mountain again. It seems a pity to wipe out such a view.

After 1890 he contributed no more to *The Alpine Journal*, but he continued his visits to the Alps, visiting the old resorts with Mrs. Butler (who shared his passion for them) and teaching his children to climb. I turn up a letter of August 17, 1897.

Klosters in Pratigau.

My dear Q.,—It is a fine morning and I am sitting in the valley. Yesterday it rained, and I had spent the previous night in a Club Hut. Such is fortune. Had I waited 24 hours in that hut—but then my family would have raised the hue-and-cry, and stalwart peasants would have explored every glacier in the neighbourhood. Such is fortune, I repeat; and, as usual on the Alps, I am her fool. So I think I will write to you. . . . I have read precious little of anything since July 4, on which day I left my home—to get left and planted at the dullest spot in the Engadine. I had, however, a beloved retreat near at hand, and spent a week there, during most of which it rained or snowed. There were some interesting people—a scientific Pole, long domiciled at Davos, and a Swiss Doctor, and wine was good and plenty. Thence I made my way to a little place in St. Gallen, where my wife with Gracie and Martin joined me. Last week we came on here—4000 feet high, in a valley of meadows (as the name imports), closed at the upper end by a pretty glacier and snow-peaks. It is a favourite place with Germans, and in a German resort one must make one's big meal at 1 o'clock, so that expeditions must be practically all day or not at all . . . and I do not care much for walks

admitting of nailless boots. [That would be a nice phrase in Greek verse—or perhaps better of the walker, *ἀσίδηρος κρηπίδων*, or so.]

I have read Od. xiii, xiv, xv, and translated a little of Dante's *Convito*. I have been up one fairly big peak, the Fluchthorn, 11,175, and several from 7500 to 10,500. I have sweated and shivered. I have been within a few hundred feet of a live eagle—he came and swung round Martin and me on the top of a highish pass, but finding we were not lambs, he went off, no doubt cursing *his* luck.

We got a *Speaker* yesterday, not by my instructions. From it I learn that you are not devoid of acerbity. . . . I care absolutely nothing for Politics, Literature, Science, or Art. There are very pretty houses here: I wonder if any owner would deal. . . . It is monstrous idleness. But I have not had a real holiday for 2 or 3 years; and, after all, I am not sure that this is not the life which the truly good and wise ought to lead. Look at the opening of *Paradiso* xi, and you will see how one feels on a mountain-side on a fine morning.

I have chosen these extracts to show the sort of mind Butler took with him on a holiday. But I am sure that almost every man carries

his truest mind when he walks alone, and maybe the reader will best divine Butler's mountaineering mind from the following paper contributed to Cassell's *Sports of the World*, about 1903.

Solitary Climbing: Some Reflections of an "Altes Murmelthier"

The practice of solitary climbing has, from very early times, incurred, and, no doubt, properly incurred, the severe reprehension of Alpine moralists. Other practices in other departments of ethics have likewise, from time to time, incurred the censure of moralists, with little or no attempt at justification, even on the part of those touched by it. Yet, somehow or other (theologians tell us it is owing to original sin), the practices do not become extinct, as according to all logic they might be expected to do. As we say, human nature is too strong for us. When Mr. Stephen, a professed moralist, found the top of the Cima di Ball, who was his companion?

It is a good many years since Sir W. M. Conway took occasion in this journal to formulate a theory, or several theories, touching the various motives by which those who seek their recreation in mountain ascents are impelled, and to classify such persons accordingly. We all know his famous subdivision of mountaineers into the

groups of " centrists " and " eccentrists," as determined by the proportion in which the various motives referred to combined to drive them Alpward. Another division, nearly, but perhaps not quite, coincident with that given above, was into " gymnasts " and "climbers "—" wanderers " would, perhaps, have been a better contrasted term. The gymnast was defined as " a man for whom the overcoming of physical obstacles by means of muscular exertion and skill is the chief pleasure of mountaineering." The definition of the other class was left to the reader's imagination ; we cannot go far wrong if we make it consist of those for whom the overcoming of such obstacles as present themselves in mountain travel by the exercise of observation and intelligence is the chief pleasure of mountaineering. Of course, the two are not mutually exclusive ; indeed, they were combined in many of the first exponents of the mountaineering pastime, and must be combined in any guide who would attain excellence in his profession. Tactical skill alone will not make a great soldier ; but still less will swordsmanship alone.

Of late, no doubt, as Sir W. M. Conway and others have often insisted, the tendency has been to magnify the gymnastic motive and to undervalue the others. The present writer was once talking to an eminent Viennese climber, and

regretting the great development of the "Wegmarkirung" system in the Austrian Alps as destructive of the pleasure of exercising one's powers of observation in finding the road. He met, however, with no sympathy. The more easily and rapidly one could be brought to one's object—that is, to the point where the gymnastics began—the better. Surely this kind of thing goes far to justify Mr. Ruskin's satire about greased poles.

Yet there must still be a few who enjoy pitting not their muscles only, but their wits as well, against all the hindrances which the Spirit of the Mountains, aided as he is apt to be by the Prince of the Power of the Air, would put in the way of those who seek to penetrate his fastnesses. To find your own way over an unknown pass in a blinding snow-storm, even when no glacier is in question, is a very different and far more exhilarating business than plodding over behind a guide, with nothing to think about except how many dry articles you will find in your rucksack at the end of the day; and here we come to our point. There can be little doubt in the mind of any one who has tried it, that the interest is vastly increased if you have no companion at all. For as Euclid might put it, with a reminiscence of Shakespeare, if two go together, either they must be exactly equal in experience and capacity (a

case that hardly occurs), or one must be older in practice, abler, in better condition, than the other. Such an one will naturally be the leader. If it is the other man, you will again be merely the plodder behind; if it is yourself, the added responsibility of getting somebody else out of the scrape besides yourself may heighten interest to the point of anxiety.

But even in fine weather one may sometimes, without being precisely a sage, see charms in the face of solitude. "The untrammelled freedom of the wanderer's life," to quote Sir W. M. Conway again, is ten times more untrammelled, if he has nobody's little fancies to consider but his own. He can choose his own hours, his own *Proviant*—his own temper, shall we add? —unchecked, uncriticised. Oddly enough, too, he is likely to get even more society. Fellow-travellers at their inn in the evening are apt to be mutually self-sufficing; unless, indeed, as will at times happen, they have fallen out by the way. But the solitary is perforce thrown on such society as the quarters afford; it may be the *Wirth*, it may be the *Curat*, or other local personage; it may be a fellow-guest. In any case he is pretty sure, in the less frequented parts of the Alps, to find civility and intelligence, to say nothing of profitable exercise in the language.

So much for solitary roaming. Solitary *climbing*

stands on a somewhat different footing, and appeals, perhaps, to a somewhat different part of human nature. It cannot be denied that the gambling spirit is gratified by it. The stake is the same as in the orthodox climb—upon this part of the metaphor each reader may put his own interpretation ; the odds against the player are longer, and the pleasure of "pulling it off" is accordingly greater.

Here we must clearly distinguish between solitary climbing and climbing without guides. That is quite a different matter ; and the propriety of it in any particular instance must be judged by its results. A guideless party differs in degree only from a party led by any amount of professional talent ; it is exposed, except incidentally, to no greater dangers ; it can attempt the same expeditions, it can go into the same places. The sole limit to its achievements is the capacity of its members. With the solitary rambler or climber it is quite otherwise. What is safe or easy for two or more is dangerous or impossible for one. For danger, the well-known case of the snow-covered glacier may serve, or rocks on which, in a party of climbers, only one would move at a time. The following instance will show how the presence of a companion may convert impossibility into ease. There is a certain tor on Dartmoor, the summit of which is formed by several granite

blocks, in shape like gigantic pillows, superposed one on another. As you stand on the slope of one the edge of the next catches you about the top button of the waistcoat. There is no handhold, and the height is just too great to allow of a steady hoist of the body from the flat palms. An acrobat might manage it, but hardly an ordinary gymnast. The writer was there once with a friend who had climbed every tor in the neighbourhood from almost every side, but had never conquered this. When two were together, however, the problem became ridiculously simple. For one to drop on one knee, and for the other to mount on the corresponding joint of his other leg was, as the old romances have it, the work of an instant; from thence it was easy to scramble on to the upper "pillow"; an outstretched hand afforded the grip necessary to enable the second member of the party to surmount the obstacle, and the first recorded ascent of —— Tor was made. Every one who has travelled in mountainous regions and stepped off the beaten tracks will be able to quote similar instances from his own experience. Some things the solitary climber must let alone.

On the other hand there is a large class of situations in which the main difference between solitude and society is that the former demands increased attention and more extended prevision. Where

with a companion you ought to be sure of ten steps ahead, alone you ought to be sure of twenty. Slopes of old snow must be negotiated with caution; they are apt to thin out at the lower end, and if you abandon yourself to the delights of a glissade for a few yards too far, you may suddenly find yourself, as the present writer once did, with the upper part of your body prone, head downwards on a steepish incline, your loins gripped by a frozen crust, and your toes dangling in vacancy above a little torrent—an attitude undignified at the best, and one from which it is not always easy, without the aid of a friendly hand, to resume the normal. You must also take increased heed to your footing, remembering that when there is no one at hand to render or seek assistance, a trifling disablement—sprain, twist, or bruise—may have very serious results. Other rules for solitary climbers or ramblers are: study your map minutely—if you propose to cross a pass, most minutely on the descending side, remembering that while it is much easier to lose the way going up hill, it is ten times more serious to lose it going down. Be very clear, especially on the descent, about the side of the stream you should be on. On the ascent look back frequently, and notice objects which you *have* passed; so that in the event of your having to retreat, the way may not be unfamiliar to you. The same remark,

of course, applies to climbs when you mean to come down the way you went up. Take especial note of the openings of side-valleys, and the points where their torrents join the main stream.

Always carry a compass, and in cloudy weather consult it every few minutes. In fine weather, accustom yourself to steer by the sun till you get your orientation instinctively. This last hint would seem superfluous did not experience show how many people may have been familiar with a place for years without knowing the 'aspects' of it, or how few seem to see instinctively on which side of a tree you ought to lie if you want the shadow to pass on to you and not off you. Conducted in this way, there can be no doubt that solitary mountaineering is a fine school for teaching endurance, foresight, and skill, to say nothing of observation; qualities for which no one is ever the worse in the mountains, even where no great "technical" difficulties are before him. After all, it is in the unlikely places that accidents happen; and the man who is accustomed to going alone learns to regard no place as more likely than another, and therefore is on his guard in all —*Explicit advocatus diaboli.*

Let us now recollect ourselves from Switzerland and Tyrol to the "home counties"; and to lesser feats, yet famous.

Towards the close of 1879 Leslie Stephen, with the aid and abetment of Frederick Pollock, George Croom Robertson (the editor of *Mind*), and a few other friends, founded the confraternity or brotherhood of the now-famous Sunday Tramps. Its purpose—the reason of its being—was to take long Sunday walks within range of London : and the original members of the society, about ten in number, were for the more part addicted to philosophy (I quote from F. W. Maitland's *Life of Leslie Stephen*, c. xvii, the *locus classicus*. Maitland came fourteenth on the roll). But there was no examination, test, oath, or subscription, and in course of time most professions and most interests were represented. The first ten were :

L. Stephen,	John Collier,
F. Pollock,	Douglas Freshfield,
G. Croom Robertson,	James Sully,
J. C. Morison,	Shadworth H. Hodgson,
Walter Pollock,	A. J. Butler,

—thus entered and numbered in the roll, which Leslie Stephen, as Captain, rigorously kept. In course of time the list of names extended from ten to sixty, as old members dropped out and new

blood was infused—for the institution carried on pretty steadily until 1895. Also some few are catalogued against whom Stephen had to write sternly "never came out": and on the roll are many names now heroic.

It omits that of George Meredith, who often joined in a part of the walk, but was too infirm for the full rigour of Stephen's untiring stride, and conscientiously refused to join on as a full member. Yet Meredith has left us, in ten lines or so, the best account of the brotherhood, its ἦθος and its customary jinks:

When that noble body of scholarly and cheerful pedestrians, the Sunday Tramps, were on the march with Leslie Stephen to lead them, there was conversation which would have made the presence of a shorthand writer a benefaction to the country. A pause to it came at the examination of the leader's watch and Ordnance Map under the western sun, and word was given for a strike across country to catch the tail of a train offering dinner in London, at the cost of a run through hedges, over ditches and fallows, past proclamations against trespassers, under suspicion of being taken for more serious depredators in flight. The chief of the Tramps had a wonderfully calculating eye

in the observation of distances and the nature of the land, as he proved by his discovery of untried passes in the higher Alps, and he had no mercy for pursy followers.

May I record here that I once cut across the scent of the Tramps. It happened at Meredith's house, under Box Hill. Leslie Stephen was there, having dropped out of the run to pay a call on his old friend. In the midst of talk he arose and fled hurriedly to catch the train, leaving his railway ticket—a *return ticket*—on the mantelpiece. I was wickedly amused and wondered if he would punish himself by walking home. He was conscientious enough to do it, and quite capable of doing it. There is no malice in this little anecdote.

A. J. B., as we have seen, came tenth on the original list. When the brotherhood was founded he had already settled at Weybridge, and so could come out only when the walk (which "met" for the start in London) was in his county—"I should say," writes Sir Frederick Pollock, "about once in seven times; but he knew that region very well and was one of the keenest Tramps.

Several times he entertained such of us as could stay for supper (also Geo. Meredith's custom at Box Hill). He wrote a Ballade of the Tramps in '81, which is printed by Maitland. Once or twice in L. S.'s absence he took charge as 'local guide for N.W. Surrey.' A report so signed by him, addressed to me as Deputy Chief Guide in the last season of the Old Tramps (1894) is in the Book. He seems to have come oftener in the later years, when Stephen was disabled; partly from zeal to keep the walks going, partly because we had come to give a more decided preference to the southern home counties."

Sir Frederick Pollock adds:

The original Tramps lasted 1879–1894. Not many years after, the walks were revived by certain sons of the founder and other Tramps, and in 1909 (November) a joint walk of old and new Tramps was held at which the continuity of the Sunday Tramps was proclaimed, and the original book in which Stephen recorded the walks was solemnly redelivered to the guide of the young Tramps (in whose custody it had been for some time) from the Stephen family, by Stephen's last deputy.[1] A. J. Butler, though

[1] [F. P.]

already in failing health, attended part of this walk.

Here is a specimen walk, recorded in a letter to Mrs. Butler, under date of May 3, 1886 :

We had a lovely tramp yesterday. Wind cold enough but day fine. Started from Guildford, walked along Hog's Back, through Puttenham to Elstead, where we were hospitably entreated by Frederic Harrison. Eleven of us in all, several new ones. Then we went on over the commons to Hindhead, and turned in at Tyndall's for tea. Afterwards we all dined with him, and after seeing the rest off, F. and I stayed and chatted awhile, and then went down to "Hind Head Copse" (as it is now to be called) and smoked. This morning I was up betimes, and helped F. to remove a notice board which the man who sold his land to him has set up within his boundary—which may result in an action, and if so, I shall have to be a witness. Then we had breakfast and walked down to Haslemere.

And here follows the

Ballade of the Sunday Tramps

If weary you grow at your books
Or dyspeptical after you've dined,
If your wife makes remarks on your looks,
If in short you feel somewhat inclined

For fresh air and a six hours' grind
And good metaphysical talk—
With a party of writers in *Mind*
You should go for a Sabbath day's walk.

Leave the town by the earliest train
(In your Bradshaw betimes underlined),
With umbrella in case it should rain,
Enduring of sun and of wind—
'Tis no harm if they toughen your rind—
Your boots you'll remember to caulk,
Your pockets with sandwiches lined,
You are good for a twenty-mile walk.

Though surely we all by our rule
Are as peripatetics defined,
Yet each philosophical school
Is here with each other combined:
Idealists, realists, find
Representatives here as we stalk
In the breezes, like them unconfined,
Over hills of clay, gravel, or chalk.

Envoy

So, Prince, leave your troubles behind,
And resolving for one day to baulk
Black care with the writers in *Mind*
Go forth for your Sabbath day's walk.

A. J. B.

April 3, 1881.

CHAPTER VII

Rivington's and Cassell's
1887–1895

A. J. B. interspersed his diary, much in Matthew Arnold's fashion, with quotations from the Vulgate —the Psalms especially—for birthdays and other occasions. Among these, and dated January 12, 1881, is an entry: "All sorts of schemes for redistributing work, remodelling Code, etc., going on at Office: which I am pretty much 'out of.' I fear I shall never get my superiors there or elsewhere to regard me as an *homme sérieux*. Perhaps I am not one."

From this I turn to 1887, and leave the following extracts to tell their own tale:

June 3.—Saw Mr. F. Rivington [the publisher], who is looking out for a "salaried partner." . . . I think it may suit, and I am pretty sick of the E[ducation] D[epartment] and the follies of officialdom as at present conducted.

Oct. 21.—Our colleagues gave Courthope and me a dinner at the Metropole. Twenty-one present, including Asst. Secs. A jolly evening.[1]

Nov. 8.—I left the Education Dept., where I had served seventeen years. The C[ivil] S[ervice] is a miserable profession as at present managed: but one makes good friends.

Dec. 31.—A year of interest to us. I have got rid of the trammels of red tape and found more congenial work. The only regret is losing pleasant friends.

A sentence or two from a letter written on January 12, 1890, to his friend Charles Chauncy Binney[1] of Philadelphia may be appended:

The papers this morning announce the death of my late chief, Pat Cumin. . . . If it had

[1] On this occasion his colleague, Mr. R. M. Tabor, wrote some verses descriptive of the company, one of which runs:

Here sits as scholar and as author known,
Whose jests relieved official vitæ tædia,
Butler, our book of reference, our own
Encyclopædia.

[2] One of the "two very pleasant Americans" whom A. J. B. met and helped at Fend in 1880 (see p. 130), and not the one who lost his hat. The meeting set up a lasting friendship. "Our acquaintance," writes Mr. Binney, "began in a most unusual act of kindness on his part: not unusual for him, perhaps, but certainly unusual for the average man. About the last thing one could expect an Alpine climber to do would be to add to his own party two young men not of his nation, utter strangers to him, and obviously rather green as far as concerned climbing, and to do so merely in order to help them out of an inconvenient situation. Yet this was just what he did, and it has always been a delight to me to look back on that climb over the Gepatsch Joch, as certainly the pleasantest day in all my climbing experiences, in spite of rather adverse weather."

happened three years ago, I might have been at the Education Department now: but, though we were good friends personally, he had a very poor opinion of me as an official, and it was the knowledge that as long as he was in command I should never get a chance of any work out of the strictest official groove that made me catch at the first chance of escape.

As will be seen, Fortune in his vocation was twice to play him fickle; but I believe A. J. B. never ceased to remember 1887 as Jubilee Year, or to associate it with the act of grace traditional on Jubilees—deliverance of captives. At Weybridge in course of time he joined the local School Board, of which his clear sense of what Elementary Education can and cannot attempt, and his knowledge of all the departmental ropes, made him a most useful member. Also in the later days of our friendship, when the Act of 1902 had dragged me deep into educational work in the extreme West of England, I could always count on him for wise and knowledgeable counsel. But I feel sure that in all our acquaintance he alluded not half-a-dozen times to his personal experience of the Education Office, and not once

at greater length than a couple of sentences. Of Eton, of Cambridge, of the Alps, of his home, his children, his friends, his literary work and a hundred-odd matters he would talk gaily or seriously, freely as one does with a friend. But somehow I seemed to divine that on those seventeen years of Whitehall he preferred to keep a closed door. At any rate I forbore to knock; and the queer part of it is that I forbore quite unconsciously. Indeed we had been friends for a year or two before ever I learned that he had been an "Official."

The Rivington partnership released him from what he had always felt as a servitude, a dull grind in which he was never given a chance—or let us say, in fairness, never made a chance—to do good work on any pattern which he had some share in inventing. But commercially the adventure did not turn out quite so happily. Messrs. Rivington & Co. were contemplating the sale of their business: a step of which Butler had not been warned and in which (as I gather) he was inadequately protected. I quote again from his diary:

May 22, 1890.—A telegram to say that the negotiations for the sale of the business to Longmans were concluded. R. & Co. therefore cease to exist on June 30th after a life of about 180 years. I do not know what the result to me will be.

June 16, 1890.—Saw T. N. Longman, who said that they would not have taken me over but for my agreement, and that when that expired (September 30, 1892) they would not be likely to renew it. So I shall have to start afresh at 48.

July 1, 1890.—To Paternoster Row. They are very friendly, but it is a different state of things, and I cannot feel that I have been fairly dealt with.

In the autumn of 1891, almost a year before the contract expired, he got an invitation to be Chief Editor for Messrs. Cassell & Co.

Nov. 5, 1891.—Saw Wemyss Reid at Cassell's. Shall probably go there.

He went, and worked as Chief Editor for Cassell's until Midsummer 1894; and that is how I come to be writing this story, obedient to one of his last wishes.

In 1892, when Butler took over at Cassell's, I had been for some little time "reader," or literary adviser, to that firm; was publishing novels and stories with them; and was also working under Mr. [afterwards Sir] Wemyss Reid, their Managing Director, as assistant editor of *The Speaker*, a weekly review of Politics, Letters, Science and the Arts, afterwards rechristened *The Nation*, and under that name still very much alive. It happened that overwork and the then prevalent influenza had broken me down in health and spirits when, late on a dingy afternoon in February, A. J. B. called at my house. I knew nothing about him except that he had succeeded to the post left vacant by the death of an old friend, John Williams, sometime a scholar of my own College at Oxford. Now Williams, on my first coming to London, had chosen to play the "elder brother" to me, seeming to shake off the weariness of his overwearied life for the fun of imparting his knowledge of all the haunts and out-of-the-way corners around Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, and "the Row"—a knowledge that ranged from quiet City churches and the

halls of guilds with their libraries, to the special dishes of uncanny restaurants and wines of recondite cellars. I mourned his loss, and was too ill to like the prospect of building up acquaintance with his successor.

The business on which Butler had come was, as I remember, quite trivial : a couple of minutes disposed of it. But he remained an hour, and I was sorry when he went : for presently he was giving me wise advice, much as one coaxes a sick child ; and, a little later, we were laughing, and for me the laughter was like the first glass of Burgundy allowed to a convalescent. We had each found a friend, and our liking lasted—without a misunderstanding amid many business discussions and a deal of private dialectic—until the day of his death. For me, it was just Montaigne's sufficient excuse—"he was he, and I was I." But I was of an age at which friends are still made pretty easily. I daresay Butler—who (as we have seen) had written of the Civil Service as "a miserable profession, *but one makes good friends*"—was hungry for that which, with all its notorious virtues, La Belle Sauvage Yard (Messrs. Cassell &

Co.'s place of business) had not supplied him; and I recall an observation of Boswell's:

Friendship, the wine of life, should like a well-stocked cellar be continually renewed: and it is consolatory to think that although we can seldom add what will equal the generous first-growths of our youth, yet friendship becomes insensibly old in much less time than is commonly supposed, and not many years are required to make it very mellow and pleasant. . . . The proposition which I have now endeavoured to illustrate was, at a subsequent period of his life, the opinion of Johnson himself. He said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, "If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship *in constant repair*."

But I cannot weigh Butler's friendship in any scales, and to find a thoroughly sufficient reason for it were probably to find a false one.

A discreet word or two must be said of the place and *milieu* in which A. J. B. was now installed. The renowned and respectable firm of Cassell & Co., Limited—formerly Messrs. Cassell, Petter and Galpin—has its premises in La Belle Sauvage

Yard, E.C., on the site once occupied by the old La Belle Sauvage Inn ; also famous in its day, albeit for different reasons. Its familiars know it as " The Yard " ; and under that name in my time affectionately blessed or cursed it. It is approached by an archway, the first turning to the left as you go up Ludgate Hill. By the passage, perennially blocked by a carrier's van, or vans, you came to the Yard, and at the end of it to a door, a stone staircase, and a lift with authors upon it, ascending and descending—that is to say, with beings whom you mistook for authors. Later, you learned that they were printers' assistants : still later (from some cynic), that you need not blush for the error—they were probably both.

Narrow tortuous passages ramified from the stone stairway among " departments " housed in hutches composed of wood and glass. To reach the Editorial Department you took three twists—right, right again, and left—and emerged upon one of several galleries running around a central well, on the floor of which, deep down, the steam-presses laboured in travail with the firm's productions—

The Quiver, Cassell's Saturday Journal, Cassell's Popular Educator, Cassell's Magazine, Chums, Little Folks, and what not. Their contending din beat on the Chief Editor's door : close outside his window, at the end of the railway-bridge stuck—in the late Walter Thornbury's phrase—like a fish-bone in the throat of Ludgate Hill, the locomotives of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company whistled, shunted, and dallied to blow off steam. "Come in!" Butler would call, and explain cheerfully, "This, you may like to know, is my 'sanctum.'"

Other corridors wound past "department" after "department," into secret places never fully explored by me. There was a Counting House, of course ; and an Art Department, a Publishing Department, a Publicity Department, a Department (it was rumoured) mysteriously concerned with the laying of eggs, a Department in which Liberal and Conservative scribes wrote leading articles for the provincial press. I shall have more to say—or, rather, Butler will have more to say—about this System of Departments ; but the reader will already have remarked in their

titles a tendency to "cross-division"—that error in logic under which Wordsworth classified his poems and an Oxford tradesman advertised himself as "University, Pork, and Family Butcher." In practice their work sometimes overlapped, sometimes ran at cross-purposes; but a common and almost ferocious tradition held them together after a fashion—whatever else happened, the Editorial Department must be kept in its place. A Board of Directors presided over this System. The late Sir Henry Fowler (afterwards Lord Wolverhampton) presided over the Board. Its Managing Director was Wemyss Reid, kindest-hearted of men.

My illness, driving me home to long retirement in Cornwall, loosened my close ties with the Yard, and gave me few opportunities to observe this new friend of mine in his daily work. But I did observe that the two secretaries who helped him—Mr. Frederic Whyte and Mr. J. S. Mann—soon conceived an affection for A. J. B., and it endured to the end. In our business relations I found him ever punctual, wise, kind, and just; averse from censure, but never afraid of it;

honourably persuaded that the relations in all commerce between buyer and seller lie in fair common profit, not in mutual antagonism. But although in the main his letters dealt with business, by swift degrees they came to be remarkably unlike business letters. They usually wound up, moreover, with some disinterested chat about poetry; the excuse for this being that I had started to amuse my convalescence by compiling an anthology of Elizabethan and Jacobean lyrics. It was published in due time by Messrs. Methuen, under the title of *The Golden Pomp*, and duly dedicated to A. J. B., who had taken a hand in the game partly for the fun of it and partly (as I divined) to encourage a recreation which he guessed to be doing me good. He had that which is not least of the rewards of loving and studying Dante —an almost impeccable taste in English verse. It was probably for this that I fell into the way of keeping his MSS.: a habit which at this moment I cannot bless without qualification: for I cling to grace by another, which (better man than I in most respects) he would never learn—that of dating all letters in full.

I make no oath, then, upon the chronological order of the following extracts :

You cannot dogmatize on Milton till you are well over thirty. There comes a time when mere sonority is a delight in itself. I quite agree that he seldom *moves* you in P. L. or P. R. (though he does, I contend, in some of the minor poems) ; but no more does Pope me, ever. Yet I read Pope with pleasure—again of a different kind. I do not think one can confine the name Poetry to the kind that makes a choke come in the voice when one tries to read it aloud : though I do think that the man who has never felt that choke has no right to have any opinions about poetry at all.

What a wonderful rhythm is B. Jonson's " Follow a shadow " ! Is there any other equally early instance of that kind of choriambic measure in English ?

" Seem to fly it, it will pursue—
In-ter-missa Venus diu."

I should like to turn Bridges on to it. . . .

" You meaner beauties of the night "—

Balston set us that for lyrics the week the P. of Wales was married (1863). I thought it was excellent of him. (You know that Wotton was Provost of Eton ?) Did you ever read the

Trompeter von Säkkingen ? There's a rather jolly song in it supposed to be sung by the trumpeter in honour of the same lady :

" Ich knie vor Euch als getreuer Vasall
Pfalzgräfin, schönste der Frauen !
Befehlet, so streit' ich mit Kaiser und Reich,
Befehlet, so will ich für Euch, für Euch
Die Welt in Fetzen zerhauen."

He got sent down for singing it, too. . . . Quite right to put in " Fair and fair and twice so fair." That has been a delight to me ever since I can remember.

While agreeing that the transcription of documents is not writing history, I dislike the Johnny Green business even more, and Froude worst of all. Green probably knew his facts, though he seldom imparts them to his readers. But I must say that I read history to find out the answers to Who ? What ? Where ? What with ? etc. Of course if, as with Gibbon, I can get these questions answered in language which it is an æsthetic pleasure to read, so much the better : but I do not demand it. As for the " picturesque " business, I can do that for myself. I read John Villani with infinitely more pleasure than Macaulay.

I am not sure that I do much like the Syracuse business. [He had promised to write on the

Syracusan Expedition for a book which I was editing.] I prefer Phormion's actions in the Gulf of Corinth. The other makes me miserable. Indeed I would never read Thuc. vi. again after the first duty-perusal. Still, it was a great event, and must go in. But it was not sportsmanlike. The Armada was, thoroughly; and the longer I live the more convinced I am that it is the sportsmanlike and nothing else which can preserve conduct from decay and oblivion. The *vates sacer* is only in it when he selects this quality for his eulogy.

You are right in the main about the novels. One sees such a frightful lot of rubbish that one's standard gets lowered insensibly. But the problem is further complicated by the fact that the absolute merits of a work of fiction are only remotely connected with its commercial success, and one is always thinking, "Is this the *kind* of rot the public will like?" Now, unless one is a real connoisseur in rot, that is often a hard question to decide. Why should not any casual illiterate MS. contain the potentiality of *Mr. Barnes of New York*? . . . I knew of the Chimney [on Scawfell. This letter was written after a visit to the Lakes, where I had commended a certain climb to him.—Q.], but did not like to try it with an inexperienced party. It was there

that the German was killed, last spring. Also I hate places where water drops on you. That long step is certainly very long. I should like to know if there is any place on the Matterhorn where you have to negotiate 8 or 9 feet of vertical rock without foothold.

I am going to Berkshire for a day or two to-morrow. May perhaps make an excursion to see Bridges. I see he has been delivered of a work with which he was travailing when I was there last—on the metre of Milton. *I* am content to believe that Milton wrote in (approximately) ten-syllable lines, with a stress (approximately) on the even syllables. But that is too simple for R. B. I know few subjects on which people tolerate differences of opinion so little as in the matter of scansion.

How did the gale of Sunday week treat you? A man from Norwich told me that in his road the air was dark with flying greenhouses. . . . Here is an extract from a catalogue which reached me to-day:

605—MYERS (F. W. H.) POEMS. Fcap. 8vo, cloth, dull.

If you see a publication called *The Town* for last week, look at the Beilage thereto. It consists of views in Samoa—only process things, of course, but interesting to one fascinated by

A Footnote to History, as I have always been. I really think that book in its way the best thing R. L. S. ever did. At least I can read it as often as anything of his. It only shows that history, and the contemporary history of a small and "non-historic" people may be presented in a perfectly sound narrative form, and yet made attractive. Fancy what Tout would have made of it!

I was reading, this afternoon, some remarks of yours about poems in dialect. I confess with regret that I don't care for such when they are really in "dialect." Scots is a language, not a dialect. From Dunbar to Burns, Scotsmen of the highest cultivation and intelligence have talked it, and there is no incongruity between the thought and its expression. But I do not believe that anyone who said "mwore" and "twoad" and "the zettun zun" ever had the sentiments which Barnes expresses in that lingo, let alone the capacity for articulating them.

Next, how will this do? If it is any good I'd like to have a go at some more; but I haven't an idea whether it is or no:—

> "Lesbia, let us live and love:
> Pedants' grumbling let us prove
> At a penny's fee we prize.
> Suns may set and suns may rise:
> Us, when one brief day is o'er,
> Night and sleep hold evermore.

Give me kisses, thousands, hundreds—
Then more thousands, then more hundreds,
Other thousands, other hundreds . . .
At the millionth kiss or so
Cook the reckoning, lest we know,
Or lest envy grudge our blisses,
Knowing all our tale of kisses." [*Catullus*, v.]

You know Daniel's lovely version of lines 4–6?

I append some briefer broken extracts in more domestic, if not more familiar, vein. The first seems to be in answer to a protest of mine against some supposed "editorial" censure.

No: not at all as "redactor." Merely as a friend with 19 years 5 mo. more (mostly spent foolishly) behind him.

We have had a lovely Christmas, fine and warm. The day itself was cloudless, with light S.W. breeze: the sort of day they only make in small sizes, so that you cannot get it in June. I have been converting a gravel-pit into a sunk garden with the aid of lumps of stone (and the birds sang like February all the time). Also I have written a brief summary of the Saga Haraldi. . . . I wish I had time to work a little more at Icelandic.

I hope this [Syracuse] will do. . . . I have made it rather a sketch of Athenian naval history

in prosperity and adversity. How much better Thucydides is than Grote in description, and Thirlwall in general narration. Indeed Grote is little more than a rather diffuse crib, with hits at Mitford.

I have been to Bradfield to see the *Alcestis* this week. Very pretty; but I'm hanged if I can make head or tail of the play. Did Euripides think Admetus a good sort of fellow? Was Eur. a Greek Ibsen? If Herakles likes Admetus, why does Alcestis so obviously despise him?

Motto for the yote—

La Vida es Sueño.' The *Vida* is all I dreamt her.

This last is an allusion to a toy of mine—*Vida*, a 7-ton cutter and a thing of beauty—in which Butler spent some pleasant whiles with me. It was only by accident of fate (I think) that the sea ranked after the Alps in his affection, as it ranked before them in mine. Certainly, as time went on, he came to love the small harbour, beside which my home lies, only less than his ancient haunt, Clovelly.

It is a harbour frequented by ships of many nations, and these vessels often arrive "in ballast,"

which they usually discharge into lighters, to be towed out to sea and sunk; but sometimes the stuff, being accounted good enough for road-metalling, is carted inland from the town quay. A. J. B.—to whom no form of knowledge came amiss—had often on our walks lamented my indifference to geology—a Cornishman, of all men, should have a sense of it! He on his side resisted my attempts to win him to Celtic folklore:

> I will study Cuculain with care, but I take no stock in Celtic legends. I can't think why, because I like Classical and Teutonic. It must be the names, I think; which always seem amorphous. Perhaps it will come some day. I find one can usually take interest in a thing if one waits. I used not to care about geology: now I have a kind of passion for it.

My revenge came one hot day when, with a pipe in the shade of a hedge, I watched him phrenetically at work discovering more and yet more of volcanic tufa in a heap of road-metal; and suppressed, with my mirth, the information that it had been brought, some weeks before, by ship from the Bay of Naples. There was also an evening

when he had, by pure accident, timed his visit for the date of our annual race-meeting, and I met him at the railway station with a warning to be prepared for some change in the habits of the little town. It could not have been arranged better had I gone to the vast expense of ordering the bookie in the crimson-plush waistcoat who emerged from the booking-office, or the troupe of Pierrots and Pierrettes at the station entrance, or the Scot in yellow McLeod tartan whom we met at the first turn of the road—all hurrying to catch the excursion train. A. J. B. kept his face and merely remarked that this was a most gratifying welcome.

For it had come to be assumed between us—by a convention gravely pushed to extravagant foolery—that however often he visited Cornwall, he always came as a foreigner, for the first time; as I was assumed to be equally ignorant of the manners and customs, fauna and flora of Weybridge and London. A business letter would interrupt itself to impart—for a specimen—this information:

I am writing in London by gas-light at 1 P.M. At home it is, I am assured, beautifully fine every

day. All I know is that 17°, 14°, 11° are the figures of my thermometer for the last three nights, and mine is, I should say, a thermometer of eironic disposition. My neighbours talk in the train of far lower temperatures.

Withal I have had but one skate.[1]

Skating is a thing you do with an iron affair strapped to your boots. This causes you to fall about a good deal and so keeps you warm. I daresay you never saw it, where you live and where I propose to render myself next Thursday by the Cornish Riviera Express. (Watkin ! What a name !)

Another convention was that I had never heard of Cambridge, he never of Oxford. So I may here cast forward a little to a happy week-end when—the convention always sternly observed between us—Butler played the guide to me through Cambridge and the recesses and wonders thereof. The curious may date it by this—that it was a brilliant hot Saturday on which the Senate decided not to admit women to University degrees. Butler had come up to vote for the

[1] A. J. B. was a keen skater. . . . In his Diary, Jan. 2, 1887, is the entry : " Skated with M. A. [Matthew Arnold], who told me that he had seen Wordsworth's last skate on Rydal Water. He fell and cut his head, being nearly 70, and was never allowed to skate again."

women. There had been an unholy undergraduate row around the Senate House: the abutment of Caius was gay with banners, proclaiming that the age of chivalry was past, or had not yet arrived (I forget which), and at the entrance of Trinity Street one trod deep in confetti. I did not, of course, miss to accept all this as part of the normal life of Cambridge; but asked innocent questions calculated to combine polite interest with as little as possible of wonder.

The curious, I say, can find the exact date from this clue. For my part I date it by remembering that, on this visit, I purchased, in Messrs. Bowes' shop, Francis Thompson's *New Poems*, recently published, and first read his "Mistress of Vision":

> "Secret was the garden . . .
> It was a mazeful wonder;
> Thrice three times it was enwalled
> With an emerald
> Sealèd so asunder.
> All its birds in middle air hung a-dream, their music thralled."

Into such a garden, just then, Butler had at length admitted me. Outwardly it was the Fellows' Garden of Trinity (and, sure, there can

be few spots on this earth where so much of beauty, of amenity, lies packed "in a little room"), and Butler wore the garb then customary for non-resident members of the Senate. It imposed upon the academic gown the top-hat of more worldly respectability, without, to the irreverent eye, achieving harmony, or æsthetic congruity, or, apart from the consecration of use, anything more than the Absurd. Outwardly, too, our talk —or his talk, rather; for I played the listener— ran on trifles, odd anecdotes, phenomena of the past. But actually while I listened I knew that this was the garden of his soul, and he was making me welcome.

Blake wrote somewhere—most likely on the margin of Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses*— that "to generalise is to be an idiot";[1] and since that day time and circumstance have taught me how much of foolishness lies in many a generalisation on the differences between Oxford and Cambridge, Oxford men and Cambridge men. Yet I will risk saying this, which I find to be

[1] This, by the way, itself partakes of the nature of a general observation.

generally true—that while a Cambridge man reverts to Cambridge as to a *place*, gracious and hallowed by the feet of great men as well as by those of his own transient youth, it does not lay on him just that spell which binds an Oxford man to *personify* Oxford, to enshrine and adore her as veritably and ineffably, at once and all together, mother and mistress and queen—and yet not three goddesses but one goddess. In depth of attachment to his own College the one man differs no whit from the other. I am not, however, speaking of Colleges, but of *Alma Mater*, University in entity: and, if I am right in this—as I am prepared to have it hotly contested—I should proceed to discover the reason of it, and especially for Trinity men, in the overshadowing stature of Trinity. It is difficult to make one statue of disproportionate members.

So I think I do my friend no injustice in saying that, while Cambridge had no son more devotedly attached, Cambridge to him was Trinity set about with ornaments and with kings' daughters for her honourable women: and an illusion like that works little harm, along with much good,

when it works in a mind as generous and liberal as Butler's. But below my understanding of what this garden meant to him I had a sense of the "Vanity of Human Wishes":

> "Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te
> Conatus non paeniteat votique peracti?"—

with a stress on *peracti*, allowable though beyond the Roman poet's intention. At twenty-three he had achieved his heart's desire (and his parents') without having reckoned that it was a place in which there might be no stay. To live one's life out in the service of learning as a permanent Fellow of Trinity, and concurrently to be, as Butler was, the best of husbands and of fathers, were a gift to be asked of the gods, and to be wisely granted by them, if the Statutes had only allowed it. But they had not: and, as it seemed to me, Butler had never been quite able to adjust his compass to a new pole. It always twitched back towards Cambridge and this garden.

On the Saturday he was my guest at the board of the Ad Eundem; a small Society of Oxford and Cambridge men in equal numbers, who alternate

a terminal dinner at the two Universities and forgot that they are grave or were ever rivals. [The rule against strangers must have been relaxed for Butler.] On the Sunday he was my host at the high table of Trinity, in that very noble hall which (having to make a stand somewhere) I declined to admit as surpassing, or indeed equalling, the hall of Christ Church. Butler in a company of his peers could talk brilliantly; and on both occasions I saw and heard him at the stretch of his form in an art which I can but admire at a distance. I admired, but prized better the morning's confidences (interrupted by the discovery of a starling's egg in the sacred gravel of the Roundabout—"The starling is a born 'Arry; a bird incurably vulgar. He—well," with a long gaze at the egg, "we will suppose it to be she—is capable of this kind of thing *anywhere*, here as easily as on Hampstead Heath").

Cras ingens iterabimus. . . . It must have been penal for Butler to go back from these glimpses of a paradise lost to the Monday din in "The Yard." But he had a Spartan sense of life's obligations, and was the last man to be com-

miserated on enduring the nuisances attendant upon any honest job, if only he were left free to fulfil it.

He was fastidious ; but the trouble did not lie with his fastidiousness, save in its forbidding him to be content with any work that could not be sharply and clearly executed. Cassell's has passed into new management under Mr. Arthur Spurgeon : and I, for one, am glad of its renewed prosperity. But the old system of cross-divided "departments"—each with a jealous say on every matter over which the Chief Editor should have had control—simply broke the heart. A state, however democratic, must be ruled by a head : and where that nominal head, under a Board of Directors, is kept the shuttlecock of "departments" at variance, there can be only one result. A. J. B. writes :

The arrangement into Departments is the most deadly obstacle to despatch in business. How anybody, with the fearful example of the public service before his eyes, can ever have organised a concern on that pattern is to me inconceivable. *Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανιή.* I wish I was *κοίρανος* for a week!

The main purpose of the Board in those days seemed to lie against the publishing of any book specially commended; or, indeed, against the publishing of any book at all. While reserving the opinion that a publishing firm could hardly maintain its dividend on a mere renunciation of publishing, one had to admit that, this policy once fixed, it was waste of money to pay anybody for counteracting it.

In March 1894 Messrs. Cassell & Co. decided to cut down expenses in the Editorial Department, and on the following Midsummer A. J. B., with some humorous remarks, left the editorial desk.

This blow—if indeed it could be called a blow—fell lightly if not imperceptibly, for it fell close upon what was a blow indeed. In July 1893 his parents had celebrated their Golden Wedding at Lincoln. It was marked by various gifts to the Cathedral, notably a beautiful Bible for the choir lectern from their children and grandchildren. A. J. B. had taken infinite pains with this, having it bound to his own design by the best hand-binder he could discover. His sister

writes, some years later, "Do you remember Father and Mother on the Golden Wedding morning, leaning together over the Bible, with tears of thankfulness that it was his choice?" Three months later the Dean travelled to preach at Maidenhead; where, close on the time for going to the pulpit, a telegram was put into his hands, announcing that Mrs. Butler, whom he had left in good health at home, was stricken with paralysis. He mounted the pulpit, preached—not knowing, as he afterwards said, how he did it—and hurried back to Lincoln.

There, having cancelled all immediate engagements, he devoted himself to his wife's bedside. Her seizure had not been a severe one, though the warning could not be mistaken; and so these two strenuous, most loving souls dwelt together and communed, as it were, in the brief afterglow of their long harvest day. It was very brief. At the close of December the influenza then raging in Lincoln entered the Deanery; and A. J. B., obeying a telegram, travelled from London to find both his parents seriously ill. The Dean died on Sunday, January 14, and on

the next Sunday Mrs. Butler followed him. They rest together in the Cloister Garth, in the north-east corner. A. J. B. writes to me from Lincoln (January 24):

I am beginning to think St. Barnabas was not such an uncommon kind of man, after all. The world seems full of sons of consolation just now. May be it is my want of experience—for I have lived now nearly fifty years without having any occasion to seek the sympathy of friends in a great sorrow—but I am certainly amazed before the amount of kindly feeling which the world contains, and, I may add, the power which people seem to have of expressing it. . . . I hope the plague is really abating with you. This house has been full of it, and it was primarily that which ended my Father's life: at least he caught a bad cold which influenza converted into pneumonia. My Mother had the same, but in her the will to live had gone. It was Christiana following Christian, though at a shorter interval.

CHAPTER VIII

Weybridge—Translations

1895—1898

"To-day ends the strangest year of my life," A. J. B. writes in his diary on New Year's Eve, 1894, and closes the Old Year with these words:

So at the age of fifty I find myself a picker-up of odd jobs and stray literary work. The summer was passed pleasantly enough as Asst. Commissioner to the Royal Commission on Secondary Education. Since then I have to do what I can with small literary jobs. Thanks be to God, all our children are well, and I myself easier in mind than for a long time. . . . *Confitebor tibi in seculum quia fecisti.* . . .

I seemed to spell henceforth, beneath the stoical humour of his letters, a double current running: exhilaration at release from office, time-table, dead routine, with an undertow of

the brown water of disappointment. Decades are sharp reminders—" Don't you feel very old ? " he wrote, on my accomplishing one. In his fiftieth year it happened to Butler, hitherto unacquainted with bereavement, to lose both father and mother, and almost simultaneously to be taught at a blow that he had not only missed to fulfil something of their hopes, but had actually let slip a " career " which was now irrecoverable. Such regrets will haunt a man even so scornful as Butler was of the cheap success of the market-place, and they held a sting of truth. He had defended the independence of his soul, which is a man's first duty : yet if he had obeyed the parental wisdom, how it might have justified its sagacity ! He had been indolent, fastidious, always a little too easy in trusting to his talent (so quick and superior to the run of talent), too eager for knowledge of this and that, all and sundry, too slack of application to a long-sighted personal goal. He, a man of the world, had somehow been throughout less worldly-wise than his saintly parents.

For my part, I hold that A. J. B. was the

better man for having held on his own way. These pages, at any rate, had never been written to celebrate the sort of success he accused himself of having missed. But he was too much of a Roman to spare himself the accusation. As late as 1903 I find him writing to his son, who has just exchanged Eton for Trinity, Cambridge:

My sending you to Cambridge at all, apart from the rather sentimental (and selfish) wish to keep up the family tradition, was of the nature of an investment. . . . As you hold no honours in your hand, and not any exceptionally good cards, you can only do this [win] by good play. I had no honours to speak of. I held good cards: I did not play them as I ought to have done; and I am where I am. Now I have to toil at hack work, at a time of life when most people are beginning to take in their sails, or at any rate to choose the work that pleases them best. What is worse, through having shrunk from drudgery and tried short cuts when I was younger, I find it very hard now to apply myself to my work, so that I am always more or less driven, and take a whole day to do what most men would do in a morning.

What you want, I am sure, is a definite purpose, or rather the determination to let nothing

(short of what is dishonourable, which I know you would rightly stick at) stand between you and your purpose. You let yourself be stopped sometimes by "One can't." Now there is nothing which "one can't," except disgrace oneself. To take a perfectly imaginary case. Suppose there was some bit of knowledge essential to your work, which you could only get by writing to the Emperor of China, and could get it so—you should write to the Emperor of China, and find a Chinese scholar to translate for you. But you would say, "One can't." You should practise the operation known as picking people's brains. In nine cases out of ten they like it. As for your coach and your lecturers, it is what they are there for. And be very suspicious about thinking you know anything until you have written it out correctly. Bacon says, "Writing maketh an Exact Man." Also, writing is an excellent challenge to indolence, and so is a moral as well as an intellectual training. Remember that character is built of habits, and habits are formed by small acts constantly repeated; integration in fact; or like a coral-reef. Much the same applies to the mind, only that is in some way more physical, depending on the condition the cells of your brain are in. You can make your brain firm or flabby, just as you can your muscles; but in both cases hard grind *with a purpose* is necessary if flabbiness is to be

avoided, and by grind I do not merely mean sitting with a book in front of you, but an effort to *know* some new thing every day, having previously made quite sure what you do know and what you do not.

Butler's three months on the Assistant Commissionership were, after some preliminaries which took him to Manchester, entirely spent in Norfolk, with headquarters at the Maid's Head, Norwich :

June 17.—My dear Q.,—At this moment I am bilious and somewhat depressed. For one thing, it appears that the Commissioners will expect a report extending to the dimensions of an average 3-volume novel. I reckoned one that Fitch wrote for a former Commission at 240,000 words ! Considering that every conceivable *fact* bearing on the subject is perfectly well known already, and most of them are in print, it is hard to see how anyone is to come up to this model. I wish to goodness they had given me Devonshire.

Sept. 20.—I finished my time in Norfolk a month ago, and have been cooking my report ever since. I wish I could confine it to the expression which one good gentleman—and he a School

Board clerk—used to me, to the effect that Secondary Education was infernal rot. But I fear that that would not suit my Commissioners either in form or matter.

Jan. 3, 1896.—My dear Q.,—Knowing your interest in imaginative literature, I am sending you a copy of my Secondary Education report—one of a lot which reached me to-day. I did not want them a bit ; but having got them I may as well get rid of them.

The letter of September 20 informs me further that he has been "filling up odd moments by translating Sainte Beuve for E. Arnold and (last week) by writing, for a periodical called *Bibliographica,* an account of those alphabetical woodcuts found in the 16th Cent.—Italian books—about which I expect I have told you." He had (to omit his prose renderings of Dante) made proof of his remarkable skill as a translator (and of his yet more remarkable dexterity in abridging) in his version of *The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot*—Napoleonic General and true spiritual son of Dumas, born before his father—and *Letters of Count Cavour and Madame de Circout, Edited by Count Nigra* :

the one published by Longmans in 1893, the other by Cassell in 1894. In the midst of these activities I received a note from him: "As I am about to bury myself for some months in a German work on Ethnology, I feel like one retiring from the world, and wish to retire at peace with all men. But I will not retire at peace with you unless you write. Is it a part of your system of life to write no letters in the second half of the year?" "The work in question"—he revelled in jargon and collected specimens for my delight—was finished in 1896 and published by Messrs. Macmillan—*The History of Mankind*, by Friedrich Ratzel; five volumes boiled down into three, "while I am boiling down Dante into a *caput mortuum* for Innes." [1]

Characteristically, having burnt his boats and set up his rest upon this glorified hack-work, he at once fell to enlarging his library and scriptorium.

Mar. 15.—We are all over bricks and mortar, beginning our addition. I cannot afford it; but it was that or going away, and it will be something to play with in August, I hope. Just now I have

[1] *Dante, His Times and His Work.* 1 vol. A. D. Innes & Co., 1866 (2nd ed. 1897).

no time to play at all. But I have had a nice walk to-day—20 miles or so—and my wife has played the overture to *Magic Flute* and *Leonora*; so I feel good. . . . Our things are coming out apace: daffodils in all corners, and violets coming on.

Oct. 9.—Let me do equal justice to my various occupations by neglecting them all, and writing to you. We are quite settled in, or as much so as people can be whose kitchen is being enlarged, whose garden yawns with trenches for drainage, and bricks and mortar abundantly. Fights with sanitary inspectors are looming. A confounded inspector has the impudence to dictate to me regarding the position of my rain-water drain. If I get through the winter without apoplexy or hydrocephalus, I shall be thankful. . . . I am divided at present between Ratzel and George Canning—the latter for choice. I believe I told you that I thought of publishing a bunch of his early letters. This has involved a lot of reading, to get properly oriented; and having once begun, one goes on. I should like to do a real life of him—only, Would any one read it? Odd that it never has been properly done.

I am writing in a newly-built room, which is to be my room-of-all-work when we are fairly

settled into one annex. The big room is fairly satisfactory on the whole, and will hold a lot of books.

He used to tell Leslie Stephen that it was the production of the *Dictionary of National Biography* that had forced him to build this library. In a note to his wife about it and its fittings he writes: "I have no preference for panelling. I shall suggest plaster, with ΨΥΧΗΣ ΙΑΤΡΕΙΟΝ on it." This instruction was carried out, and the dedication of the room as "the soul's healing-place" remained for a year or two on the arch over the fireplace, until the room was papered. On the mantelshelf he kept two small photographs in oval frames—one of James Riddell of Balliol, the other of John Mill of Clovelly, personifying, side by side, the good life contemplative and the good life of action.

He had a good library—"a scholar's library" said the auctioneer who came to appraise it after his death. It contained a valuable collection of Dantes and old Italian books. In accordance with his wish these were afterwards given to his University; and his little collection of books of the

old Gioliti press was purchased by some of his friends, led by Sir Charles Holroyd, and given to Trinity College library as a memorial. On the first page of the Dante catalogue, which he made himself, he wrote, "*Cum interieret non sumet omnia.*"

The letters last quoted are punctuated with groans over Ratzel—"that infernal nigger book": and meanwhile Lord Acton had set him to do

an awful job, viz. boil down the French wars of religion from 1560–94 (say) into 17,000 words for his Variorum History. He expects me to go to the B. Mus. and look up original documents too, if you please.

The Memoirs of Baron Thiébault appeared in 1896 (Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., publishers). It "comes pleasantly as light evening work after a morning and afternoon spent in wrestling with my German ethnologist"—for whom, before he had done, Butler conceived something like a personal hatred.

He says that a normally developed German is physically and corporeally a finer specimen of humanity than the average Zulu. Would not you like to see a fight between 100 of each sort—assegais only permitted?

The theory of a man who does something eminently well has usually the defect of not carrying any one very far. Butler's, at any rate, had the merit that it made no masonic secret of a business which is, after all, mainly a matter of tact. "My theory is that a translation ought to be written in grammatical and fairly fluent English, so rendered that any good scholar would be able to retranslate it verbatim into the original. There are, of course, as many moulds of thought as there are languages, and inevitably the thought is influenced by its vehicle. A Frenchman, for instance, may be more logical in expression because his vocabulary is not so full as ours, and therefore he puts his ideas in fewer, clearer words. On the other hand, I often find that certain trains of thought are not only German in character but inevitably in expression also"—and he once, happening on a German sentence sixteen lines long, carefully translated it to length. "It gives you the author rather than Butler, anyhow," he remarked, perusing the result.

The secret, in fact, comes to this, that in dealing with a foreign book Butler knew what

he was about. In Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian he had the equipment of a scholar, with a working knowledge of Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, and Dutch. He also knew English, and could write it. Moreover he took pains. His remarkable talent for "abridgment"—he condensed the five long volumes of Thiébault into two—was begotten by Cambridge conciseness upon natural reticence.

In one particular this last word must be qualified. I imagine him writing this Memoir, and at this point adding that "he had, I regret to say, a foible for writing to the public press: nor was it a complete justification of this habit that it amused his friends." Amuse them it certainly did. I have a collection of these fugitive trifles before me, pasted into three volumes, the whole headed in his handwriting: *A. J. Butler. His Contributions to Public Discussion, from April* 1 (*an appropriate day*) 1876. They start with a pretty concatenation of subjects—the Preface to *The Baviad and Maeviad* (with a moral upon the late Mr. Edmund Yates), the Altruism of

Ants, London Water and its Inhabitants (*suaves res, si non narrâsset causas earum et naturas*), the Russo-Turkish War (several), Greek at Cambridge, "Bad English," Sleeping Cars on the Continent, Royal Surnames, the "Pia" of Dante's *Purgatorio*, Mr. Gladstone, Chinese Christians, The Deceased Wife's Sister, the Wine Tax, *Cicero*. They deal with English hotel-charges and the costume of Bishops, with Second Wranglers and with Rabies in Dogs. They glance at Sir Edwin Watkin as a Company Promoter, at Professor Flinders Petrie as an interpreter of St. Paul. ["To say that St. Paul did not see it needful to prohibit polygamy is either a truism or grotesque. So far as I am aware he nowhere prohibits cheating at cards."] For these ἔπεα πτερόεντα the Holy Roman Empire is not game too high, nor the split infinitive too common; neither did Mr. Gladstone go too fast, nor a South Eastern Railway train too slow for them. They all go into the "mixed bag," and A. J. B., if asked why he had done it, could only plead with the Three Jovial Huntsmen that he had "powdered up and down a bit and had a rattling day."

Among his earlier papers I find a sonnet:

Thoughts on Reading the Decameron

A gallant company of youths and maids
Pass'd from the plague-struck city, and halted not
Before they came unto a pleasant spot
Where nightingales sang sweetly 'mid cool glades
Of garden, and the duly water'd blades
Dipp'd in the stream. There, when the day was hot,
They told their merry tales, all fears forgot,
'Neath trellis'd vines and odorous orange-shades.

And yet—though England is not Italy,
Nor London Florence, nor can Brompton boast
The flowers of orange nor the orange ripe,
Nor trellis'd vines nor nightingales—still I
Read and not envied those: for one thought crost
My mind—"Good Boccace never smoked a pipe."

Now, in his library at Weybridge, Butler lit his pipe, settled down to his daily task and, participating in their pleasures, to bring up his family in godliness and good learning. For this last, here is a characteristic note to his wife, on choosing a governess:

There is no need for a first-rate scholar. I can give them the scholarship. What we want is some one to give them the stimulus, to teach them to do things with all their might, and to give them the desire to excel in whatever they may take up—botany, language, history, anything; which can only be done by plodding. In other words, we want some one who can saturate them with a sense of *duty*, and yet keep clear of pedantry.

He delighted in the smallest delights of his household. His letters to me solemnly enclose programmes of nursery theatricals, and the children do not rejoice in possession of a new dog but I get a joyous report of it. He tells me that he has bidden farewell to publishing and straightway proceeds:

A more cheerful subject is a new dog. Such a dear little beast! White fox terrier with lemon head: 2½ years old with a pedigree and a prize. Has changed owners in consequence of killing a lamb—I fancy by mistake for a rat. Wants to fight every larger dog he sees, but is thoroughly amiable at heart. He bites me, but no one else; and dogs always bite me, I find, as a sign of affection.

We had a tragedy yesterday. Gracie's beloved guinea-pig was slain by Bully. They had just erected an elaborate run of wire netting for the poor little animal : and in the course of a minute or two during which it was left unwatched, the dog got one of the posts up, inserted his nose, and gripped the unhappy rodent, who expired in a few minutes.

I always say that it is unlucky to go into a newly-built house.

He was buried later on, in a card-box filled up with pansies and other flowers of the season. A small friend from next door, the original donor of the pig, dug up his own best hyacinths to plant on the humble tomb, and proposed to erect a cross. But a plain slab is thought more appropriate.

So, during these years, he worked and played; and always his help and the store of his multifarious knowledge were at the disposal of any fellow-student who sought it; always gladly given, and most gladly to the young.

Note.—Since writing this chapter I have come across the following, written to Count Nigra by a French critic who had been reading the Cavour Letters : . . . "le traducteur a fait mentir le proverbe Italien. Il a traduit sans trahir. Il est évidemment un homme intelligent, sachant le français, ce qui se rencontre souvent chez les Anglais, et sachant aussi, ce qui est beaucoup plus rare parmi eux, l'anglais."

CHAPTER IX

The Record Office—Last Days

1898–1910

In 1898 Butler was offered work at the Public Record Office by his friend Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte, Keeper of the Records. He took up his task that year, soon found delight in it and in the friendships he made there, and continued in it (travelling up from Weybridge to Chancery Lane and back) until the last fortnight of his life.

He edited, in all, five volumes of the *Calendars of State Papers—Reign of Queen Elizabeth.* Undoubtedly the deciphering of documents wore upon his eyesight in these later years, and failing eyesight was a sore trial to one who loved books as Butler did ; but he maintained to the end that he could read any book printed before 1500 much more easily than any modern one.

That was his way. His letters of this period (save when they touch on politics) abound with cheerfulness.

This is really very good sport, though hardish work by reason of the abominable writing and spelling. But I cannot imagine how anyone can have the cheek to write a history. A lifetime would seem too short to read the documents. I suppose the usual way is to settle what you are going to say and then look for a few facts in documents—or in indexes—to back it up. I am convinced that between the *Quellen* and Dumas there is no real halting-place.

Come and look me up here [Record Office]. Then I will jolly soon let you know all about Clio —though indeed I am beginning to think that there ain't no such person, or that, if there is, her family is far more near akin to the Scotts and Dumases than to any of the gentlemen who write what is called history in this or any other country. They are all right, but they have no use for the Muse. . . . Bless you, no !—I am not a freemason. My brother has lately become one ; but, so far as I can make out, the only tangible result is the loss of his umbrella, stolen at the dinner of his lodge.

Yours of yesterday just received. You do not perhaps know that Shakespeare went out of his way to make Juliet young. In the Italian story she was 18. Also observe that the play does in some degree make for disparity of age. Romeo

—as I have shown in an opusculum to be found in an old no. of the P.M.G., perhaps 20 years back—cannot be much, if at all, under 30. Still I am quite with you as regards 45 and 18 marriages. The French say that $h = 2\ \ w - 10$ is the proper formula; with which the particular case given by Hesiod agrees (where $h = 30$, $w = 20$). . . . No doubt those early medieval and Elizabethan marriages had a great deal to do with the shortness of life. You know that none of our sovereigns reached 70 before the 18th cent. . . . I agree entirely that if men married at 25 or 26 it would be much better than the state of things we are coming to. Only I should require a much higher standard of continence before marriage.

Dec. 30, 1900.—I have been reminded of your continued existence by the appearance of *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, a copy of which my family gave me at Christmas; and so was minded to send you a greeting for the new century . . . . By the way, did you ever hear of an anthology called *The British Egeria*? My 1718 Daniel has been scored all through by some Johnny who seems to have been compiling a work under that title. . . . You remember that poem you extracted (from Bullen, I think) and put in *The Golden Pomp*?

"Yet if his Majesty, our sovereign Lord."

Reading Bishop Grosseteste's life the other day, I came across what may have given the suggestion for it. Writing to the Convent of Peterborough he says, "Who is there who, if he were about to entertain an earthly king, would not cleanse and purify in every way his abode, sparing neither labour nor expense until the house was duly prepared with all adornment? But in your monastery the King of Heaven continually dwells," etc. A collection of Grosseteste's letters was printed in 1690 (Brown, editor). Can we put the poem as late as that?

The last of Butler's translations had appeared a month or so before he sent me this New Year's letter; and the making of it was a remarkable literary—or, as he would have interrupted, "say 'journalistic'!"—feat. The title-page correctly advertises his share in it: *Bismarck* | *The Man and the Statesman* | *Translated from the German under the supervision of A. J. Butler* | *London* | *Smith, Elder & Co.* The story is this: Quite early in October 1899, Mr. Reginald Smith, Q.C., of the publishing firm of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., asked Butler to come with him and see "a new book that had been offered for trans-

lation." They repaired to the Hôtel Métropole (fifth floor), where the agents of Messrs. Cotta, the German publishers of Bismarck's *Memoirs*, awaited them.

One of them spoke English fairly fluently [says A. J. B.], and we soon discovered that they had everything ready for inspection. They produced a bound and printed German book in one volume, which I supposed was the final form in which Bismarck had approved the work—though I seemed to have noticed a few differences in the form given to the German public. . . . I was anxious enough to look at what they brought, and, as time was important, I lit a pipe and read as hard as I could. It did not take me long to make up my mind. I was sure, before I began, that all the "oddments" and eccentricities had been given to Busch, and that what I had to see would not be merely after-dinner stories, but the real volume by which Bismarck wished posterity to judge him, his κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί, written not for mere amusement, but to provide material for the historian, to give a full brief to his advocate. So I quickly gave Mr. Smith my opinion that he ought at once to take the English rights.

It must have been about the 8th of October that we chose our staff of translators, for there was no

hope of any one man being able to get through the work in time. Three ladies and six gentlemen were promptly found and engaged upon the business, and my first 'copy' reached me in a week's time. My business was to fit these nine versions into a connected whole. On Saturday, Oct. 15th, my work began; and as, naturally, all nine styles were different, I had to stick to my desk seven or eight hours every day for five weeks before I could satisfy myself that the public would not discover where the "joins" came in, and would get a thoroughly correct version. On a certain day—I forget the exact date—all my MSS. had to be ready for the press by 2 o'clock; and I handed in the bundle at 1.30, to the evident delight of Messrs. Smith, Elder's excellent assistant. Everything had worked smoothly and easily in the office; for everyone seemed anxious to help, and everyone knew exactly what to do. It was on the 18th of November that I saw the final proofs, answered the last queries of the conscientious readers in Messrs. Spottiswoode's Printing Office, and walked out with no little relief, free at last from Bismarck and all his works.[1]

There is more in this last sentence than meets

[1] Butler corrected the final proofs of the index on November 20 Advance copies were being sent out on November 26—less than seven weeks from the day when the translators first saw the original German.

the eye. The career of Bismarck intrigued him intellectually, but A. J. B. was the unlikeliest man on earth to feel any moral sympathy with the forger of the Ems telegram, or, when he interrogated ultimate causes, anything short of a profound moral aversion. I did not know of this Bismarck adventure at the time, as no doubt he lacked leisure to tell me about it; but on November 26—the day on which the advance copies went out—he wrote me a funny letter on our own Bismarckian adventure in South Africa and our "loathsome" daily press. No professed "patriot," I dare to say, felt a keener anxiety for his country and her soldiers than did A. J. B. during the Boer war; but loathing is the only word to express his attitude towards the financiers and the Jingo newspaper-men who had (in his belief) engineered the whole business and brought England under condemnation of the whole comity of Europe. He writes to his friend C. C. Binney in America (February 11, 1900):

I wish you or anyone would tell me what we are at war for. . . .Of course now it is begun it must be finished; but I can assure you that

people are by no means so agreed on the justice and necessity of this war as the newspapers seem to indicate. I should say that an anti-Turk in 1878 was far more likely to find himself in a minority of one in any company of respectable people (to say nothing of a Northern sympathiser in 1863) than a "Pro-Boer"—the favourite Jingo term now. Note that the class who promoted this war was the same as would have had us back the Turk and the South by force of arms. They are the people who would abolish popular education, restore "Protection," put down Trades Unions by law; and who would have hooted down Burke for advising the conciliation of the North American Colonies. As old John Bright said, before age had weakened his perception—"They always have been wrong; they always will be wrong: and when they cease to be wrong they will cease to be the Tory party." What makes this worse is that behind it all is the loathsome gang of international capitalists. . . .

I am sick of the whole business. One wakes at night and thinks of those poor Highlanders hung up on a wire fence 50 yards from the trenches: Kimberley unrelieved because the War Office had not the wit to know what I and thousands of others could have told them—that wire nippers would be useful. Now they have ordered 4,000 pairs! . . . I perceive that I am not a cheerful

correspondent *patriai tempore iniquo*. It is the worst time I have ever known since I was old enough to know anything. Success and failure seem equally dangerous, and there's no honour to be got from either.

When he came in with the evening paper containing the news of the disaster at Nicholson's Nek, he was silent with surprise and grief, and then exclaimed, " If I were twenty years younger I declare I would go out ! "

Butler was not the only Englishman who went about in those times as a man possessed of a dreadful premonition of which the mass of his fellows had no sense. What he saw (and fiercely described in a letter to the press) was the misconduct of London on " Mafeking night " : what he did not live to see (but it would have done his heart good) was the Roman sobriety of England, from the capital down, during the tremendous crisis of 1914. He loved his countrymen, but he feared for them ; and he feared because he saw them yielding more and more, during his latter days, to the insidious fallacy of " national hatred," a fallacy (as he maintained) carefully distilled

into the bodies politic of Europe by financiers operating through a subservient Press. To use his own words :

We have heard a good deal of this fallacy lately. Wiseacres write to the papers asking, "Why does Austria (or France, or Germany, or Hohenstiel-Schwangau, as the case may be) hate *us?*" I fail to attach any meaning to the implied proposition. I know some Austrians, some French, some Germans, who to the best of my belief do not hate *me*. Many other Englishmen also know such. No doubt I know of some who, if I were a sufficiently powerful personage, *would* hate me, and whom I should wish to do so. But then I know of some Englishmen of whom the same might be said : men whose hand, I trust, I should have the presence of mind to refuse if it were held out to me. Do I therefore "hate England," or wish "England" to hate me ?

The truth is that our habit of referring to a nation as an indivisible unit of the feminine gender is responsible for a deal of international ill-feeling, and merely plays into the hands of those who make their profit by fishing in troubled waters. Community of ideals, or even of interests, unites men more than community of taxation. (May 31, 1900.)

Now "community of taxation" here is a phrase of dialectic, and in our dialectic I had frequent occasion to urge that the community of a great many ideals in this wicked world was a community *within* a particular nation and pretty well ceased at its frontier. Butler would maintain with great force that "the proportion of wise men, or of good fellows, or of decent folk who are the salt of the earth, does not appreciably differ in any half-dozen civilised countries you may choose"; and this may be; but it does not get around the trouble that, as we now too fatally see of Germany, a doctrine of "national hate" or of national boastfulness, sedulously fostered in a people by its rulers, may become endemic, infect good and bad together, and make good and bad together a solid nuisance to civilisation.

Butler would, no doubt, have granted this; but being an ardent Englishman and mainly concerned with the things of the spirit, he was preoccupied with the spiritual danger of his own countrymen. He was a Liberal of the last century—a Victorian Liberal, if the reader please—and therefore an "individualist," impatient of such a personifi-

cation as "the State," or "our Empire." He hated generalisations and loved to reduce them to definite concrete terms ("Else, what was I doing at Cambridge?" he would have asked). But he had the sturdiness and honesty of his school. On the one hand he laughed at the pretence that we were at war because President Kruger had assaulted us: quoting the *Discours Merveilleux sur Catherine de Medici:*

En matière de combats, qui premier met l'épée au poing est coupable, et non qui premier frappe.

And, from Machiavelli:

Come non quello che prenda prima l'armi è cagione degli scandali, ma colui ch'è primo a dare cagione che le si prendono.

But on the other hand he had austerest comfort for those who, sharing his opinions, would bewail that they were roughly treated at public meetings.

Freedom of speech—that is, the right to express opinions not in themselves unlawful—only exists as against the *Government*, not as against the public. If I make a speech which is obnoxious to the Government, and that Government sends its officers to punish me or to intimidate me, then

I am entitled to say that one of the most precious privileges of a freeman has been invaded. If, however, I address my speech to my fellow citizens, they are not in the least obliged to listen to me, and if I persist in speaking of that which annoys them they are fully entitled to express their disapproval within legal limits. I do not say that they are entitled to knock me on the head, but they are certainly within their rights in shouting me down. Freedom of speech as against the public is a matter of lungs, not of right.

He brought the same habit of thought to bear on the Tariff Reform controversy, which (it will be remembered) grew, or took its revival, out of the South African War. The root-fallacy of Tariff Reform, he insisted, is the assumption that one country trades with another country. Thus he writes to the *Westminster Gazette:*

Sir,—Your correspondent who wrote yesterday says that "New Zealand is trying to make her own shoes." May I point out that neither New Zealand nor any other country makes shoes? Certain individuals—perhaps one in a thousand—make them: the rest buy them. The result of a tariff is that the 999 have to pay more for the shoes. The one collars the difference. It is

sometimes urged that you ought to deal by preference with your fellow-citizens ; but I notice that this always applies to the buyer only. Does the New Zealand shoemaker—or any producer in any country—sell cheaper to a fellow-citizen than to a foreigner ? I should like to see his face if it were suggested.[1]

The argument, so put, seems as incontestable as that Free Trade is the *natural* way of trading in a world of men and States agreed to play fair. The intelligent Protectionist only comes in with the Watch's question to Dogberry, " How if 'a will not ? " Even so, every sane man knows that peace is better than war. There is no question about it until you encounter a bully. I hold no brief here on either side of the argument, but have tried to indicate what were my friend's life-long political principles.

On March 3, 1907, it was discovered that he was suffering from diabetes. He wrote in his

[1] Extract from a letter of this period : " I made a stanza long ago ; but cannot make any more to it. Will you take it and complete the poem ?

The General Public, more or less,
Care not a —— for Outs or Ins ;
But all agree that Joseph's mess
Is twice as large as Benjamin's."

diary this day, "*Benedicam Domino qui tribuit intellectuum mihi: insuper et usque ad noctem increpuerunt me renes mei.*"

He was always sanguine about illness: and the courage he had more than once put into others, now, when his own time came, proved itself undiminished, being genuine. His friend Henry Jackson writes:

During the months of Butler's ill-health I admired unceasingly his courage and his serenity. In the "Apology for Sciolism" of which I have spoken,[1] he had written of "the good that may be gained by a slight acquaintance with one's own body," and had brushed aside my objection that a little learning may make a man a *malade imaginaire*. When the failure of his eyesight and the obligations of a severe and troublesome diet was pressing him sore, he amply justified his early forecast. He early recognised his limitations and made the best of them. He looked the dangers in the face and did not permit them to sadden him. He took an intelligent interest, which was not morbid, in his symptoms, and he carefully noted the effects of variations in his diet. Knowing that life was precious, he went about his literary undertakings as quietly and as

[1] [See pp. 50–52.]

steadily as he had done in health, and he continued to enjoy, as always, the society of friends. He said to me, in so many words, that he had no inclination *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*. His calm envisagement of his disabilities was at once a lesson and an encouragement. I saw him for the last time in February 1910, when he, Francis Storr, Basil Champneys, G. A. Macmillan, and I talked together in the billiard-room of the Athenæum.

I am permitted to add a characteristic letter of A. J. B.'s to his doctor:

Feb. 21, 1909.—My dear Rob,—I hope my "courage" is not of the variety which results from ignorance of danger. But in any case I do not see much to be afraid of. Sixty-four years of life (mostly inefficient) ought to be enough for anybody. But it is hard to conceive oneself in imminent peril when one feels as well as I do. I think, after all, I shall die in my boots—probably at a crossing or on the "Tube" stairs. . . .

Hot bicarb. of soda is rather beastly. It is nice enough cold.

The snowdrops and aconites are beautiful, and the thrushes are singing like mad.

He broke the news to me in a letter half-humorous, half wistful. It managed to convey

that the trouble might be spoken of freely, but that the skeleton must on no account be treated as a bugbear : and to this extent we talked frankly, while behind our discourse my heart sometimes ached if his did not. His eyesight had by this time failed perceptibly. The old injury, too, to his right hand had been revived by rowing, and in these years gave him great trouble : and for the first time in his life he fulfilled his wish to have a boat built to his own design in 1908. Again, as in the competition for the Trinity Fellowship, he had recourse to his left hand, and his last letters to me are all in this left-handed script, which steadily improves itself into something daintier than one man in twenty takes the pains to achieve with his right. " When it came to the point, I thought I would see what a left hand was good for, and it has responded on the whole very fairly. With the aid of the machine [typewriter] I hope it may last my time."

He went on steadily with his task at the Record Office. He had always been severe with himself about keeping engagements ; never, for seventeen years, missed a day at the Education

Department; never once in forty-nine years stayed in bed for breakfast; could not tolerate the young who were late of a morning, servants who scamped their work or (worst of all in his eyes) clergymen who neglected their duty. But his spirit was not less cheerful than austere. At home he fell to work bravely upon an anthology of early Italian verse, *The Forerunners of Dante* (posthumously published by the Clarendon Press). Also he assures me in a letter, "On the rare occasions when I have a day free I feel bound to realise my Maker's original idea by taking some bodily exercise." Here are some sentences from his correspondence which I group about this time:

My dear Q.,—Several points in your letter (the receipt of which gave much satisfaction) seem to call for a rejoinder; and as I cannot tell which side of the grass I shall be two months hence, I will deal with them at once. . . . For poetry, I see none in these times: none modern, I mean. I buy what any of my young friends publish, but I usually leave it on the table. Of that *centum qui proficit annos* I am not likely to hit on any which has escaped your search. . . . How do

you like "Alone walking" (Skeat, Chaucer, vol. vii. p. 448)? I lighted on it by chance yesterday, and it rather took my fancy.

. . . Yes, it is a rum world. However—as a pupil of my Father's in bye-gone days used to say, "This world and the next, and then all our troubles will be over."

. . . I am glad your boy has made a good start. *Character* is everything. Books do not matter a hang; nor games either, except as they test character.

. . . My view of Mackail's experiment [Odyssey] was expressed in a recent number of *The Athenæum*. I cannot believe that any form of stanza will do; though the Chaucerian 7-lines might answer for parts—say ix-xii. Demodocus, the somewhat improper, would do well in octosyllabics.

. . . The loss of F. W. Maitland hits us very hard. I do not think you ever knew him. I wish you had. M., by the way, was a good "pro-Boer": his clear wit saw through a swindle fast enough.

I give this small extract, though on the surface trivial as well as provocative, because in truth (as it seemed to me when we met) the loss of Maitland, whom he had loved and admired but a little "this side idolatry," and the bruise which his spirit had taken from the business of the South

African War, together depressed him—at any rate consciously—far more than his own disease. I may add, as trifles are often important to a sick man, the *fumum et opes strepitumque*—the "dust, noise and stinking opulence"—of the host of motors by this time desecrating the roads about Weybridge and spoiling his country rambles. He could never hear Brooklands mentioned but he broke into invective half earnest, half whimsical.

[*With the gift of a little volume of Italian lyrics*] By the way, there is a very excellent Spanish volume in the same series, which I would also send you if you would read it. As a tongue Italian is not in the same class with Spanish. I have lately started on the *Lusiad*, which opens rather comically . . . .

It seems to me that this casual utterance might be commended, just now, to a good many doctrinaires with axes to grind. Here was a man who had spent no small part of his working days in studying the greatest of Italian poets, and patiently making good the ground on which some knowledge of *The Divine Comedy* might be claimed as necessary to any liberal education. In my experience, most men who take up an

"unpopular" subject develop (or narrow) into ferocious advocates of its study. This was not Butler's way. He saw the favourite study of his life, comparing it with other fields of study, in almost too modest proportions.

Nevertheless, having been Professor of Italian Language and Literature since 1898, it was with something of pride that he received his appointment as Barlow Professor of Dante Studies in University College, London. He gave his Inaugural Lecture on October 27, 1909, having but a few months to live: and I append it to this Memoir as a sound specimen of Butler's writing and in some sort an *apologia pro vita sua.*

He paid my home a couple of visits in those later days, for holidays among the Alps had been abandoned perforce. "It doesn't work," he explained, "with the young ones all going up-hill and myself all the time going down." But he kept his old delight in the sea. At the last, as he went out of my porch, he took his old Clovelly guernsey and put it over my son's shoulders laughing and with some light word about "prophet's mantle" —the habitual *εἰρωνεία* maintained to the close.

I did not see him again ; but he had made friends at Fowey, and I believe that two of them —Mr. and Mrs. Austin M. Purves, of Philadelphia —had some part in persuading him to undertake an adventure which, in his state of health, was almost heroic. In May 1908 A. J. B. and Mrs. Butler sailed out by the Hamburg-American line, and landed at Philadelphia on June 1. Mr. and Mrs. Purves, his old friend C. C. Binney and Mrs. Binney, were down at the wharf to greet them. The next day they went on to Washington and stayed two nights at the Embassy with the Bryces (now Viscount and Viscountess Bryce). The Ambassador, another old friend, showed the sights, and they went down the Potomac to Mount Vernon, where A. J. B. did not omit to take off his hat by the grave of George Washington. (But later, at Boston, he revenged himself upon the noise of the Fourth of July by appealing, amid the uproar, to have explained to him the difference between Faneuil Hall and Tammany Hall—" he was never quite clear in his mind about this.")

Engagements did not allow them to visit

" the waterfall down in Buffalo." They returned to stay with the Binneys at Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, and the two friends enjoyed, in the Wissahickon Valley, the last of their many tramps together. From Philadelphia the visitors made for Middletown, Connecticut, as guests of Mr. Charles Binney's brother, and thence away for Nova Scotia, where their eldest daughter (Fanny) had been at work for more than a year as a schoolmistress in the little town of Windsor. The real excuse for the trip had been to combine this visit with a meeting of the Boston Dante Society. The meeting missed fire somehow, though Mr. Robinson, the secretary, welcomed them warmly ; but to Boston the Butlers went back, and A. J. B. not only had some agreeable talk about Dante with Professor Charles Eliot Norton, but came in for the Harvard Commencement with all its feasting and glory.

The next day we went to the annual gathering of the Phi Beta Kappa, where I walked in procession with pink and blue ribbons in my button-hole, being adopted for the occasion into the class of 1877. Old Dr. Furness delivered the

"oration"—a delightful rambling discourse, full of learning and humour, on certain Shakespearean points.

The Yale-Harvard boat-race was on at the time, and "we tried to feel that it was as important as the Oxford and Cambridge ditto!"

They sailed for home from Boston in the White Star Liner *Republic* on the 4th of July, putting out from shore amid the patriotic flag-waving and cheering proper to that day.

The heat towards the end of their stay had been excessive; and all the kindness of friends, the quiet of the club to which he was introduced, and the coolness of cocktails, could not cure his nostalgia for our English climate. Moreover, though one of the most temperate of men, and even abstemious, in his diet, Butler was impatient of an invalid's regimen as, while his heart continued to go out to his fellows, he abhorred to practise an unsocial habit in their company. His last letter to me recounts gleefully how he attended a Trinity Feast, taking for guest a friend he had met under my roof. It is dated "Dec. 26, 1908."

Four weeks ago I walked seventeen miles,

carrying a little weight; and was all the better, though stiff. Ice-cream in the U.S.A. did not improve things; but health decent again now. We sang your Carol (with Stanford's music) at Christmas. So, with all best greetings to you all, I am yours ever.—A. J. B.

Actually he was failing fast throughout the following year. He went up to the Public Record Office for the last time on February 12 1910; finished his notes on *The Forerunners of Dante* on February 14, and died, after five days' illness in bed, on February 26, 1910.

Towards the end he expressed a wish to be buried at Wantage, "where the larks sing": and there, at the foot of the Berkshire downs, he was laid on March 1, close by the Cemetery Cross erected in memory of his beloved aunt, Miss Barnett. Dante's Rose of the Blessed is carved on the stone covering his grave, with the words *Luce, Amore, Letizia*, with which Beatrice welcomed her poet to purest Heaven.[1]

[1] *Paradiso*, Canto xxx, ll. 40–42. His own note on this passage (*Paradise*, p. 389) is "Light, love, joy, are the complements of Faith, Love, hope." Because he had always loved the sea, this verse of the Psalmist's is added—*So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.* It is also the foundation of a noble passage in Dante's *Convito*.

As I have allowed the narrative to reveal, there were days—and towards the close, in the shadow of a disease notoriously depressing to the spirits—when my friend, looking back on his career, had to acknowledge that it had been, on the whole, something of a miss-hit : and I have allowed this as well for the sake of truth as because, trying to read back, I feel sure he would have wished the admission to be made. For along with the high standard he inherited, and his sensitiveness to anything that fell short of it, he preserved a Roman integrity that obliged him to render the account against himself to the last farthing. I never knew a man who was less of a self-deceiver.

I endeavour, then, to face the account out with him. Before I entered into the privilege of his friendship, years had brought him the philosophic mind : he started also with me as a comforter in physical trouble, and I dare say that the first conditions of our acquaintance were always remembered, if but subconsciously. He began, and remained, the mentor and helper, and we two had never a cross word. But while nothing could be

clearer than his trustfulness and his almost child-like inability to believe any wrong in those he loved, it was equally clear that, if you didn't happen to be one of the fools he happened to love, you had a small chance of being suffered gladly.

He was, as I have said, fastidious : impatient of the second-rate, and of all loose thinking. I make no doubt that as a schoolboy and as an undergraduate he offended many who—noting his eyeglass and borrowing it for their own eye—reckoned him "supercilious." His mind galloped, and in those days it delighted in idling, catching up with duller minds at the last moment, maybe passing them with a shade of contempt, to be remembered against him with that tenacity with which the dull in this world revenge themselves. At Eton he was never in "Pop," though he should have been its President.

It must be allowed, moreover, that to the last he claimed and maintained, even as a scholar, the divine right of "cussedness." He once wrote (and printed) the proposition, "If a scholar like to take his fling now and then, and diversify his labours with a little paradox, why should we

grudge him the amusement?" He certainly delighted in flings of this sort, and regularly, as of set purpose, raised the temperature of the Oxford Dante Society when he attended its meetings. His sarcasm or his challenge came to the bowstring and was sped in a moment; but he was as incapable of hurting any man's feelings with intent as of harbouring one thought of malice after the sharpest bout of dialectic. In short there was nothing cantankerous in this foible, which partook rather of the nature of playful mischief.[1] It hardly did, however, for practice upon a Government Department or, at a Directors' Meeting, upon a retired-colonel-turned-publisher. As he once quoted to me in a joyous letter—

> "Many a green isle needs must be
> In the deep, wide sea of—Philistie"—

and the world, we agree, is sadly the poorer since the composition of *Kubla Khan* was interrupted for ever by the visit of "a person from Porlock." But the world being mainly inhabited by persons from Porlock, and its ordinary business conducted by them, and its patronage largely in their hands,

[1] I have heard him argue, at length, that a Cornish pasty could be made as successfully with cooked meat as with fresh—and this with a lady who knew all there is to be known on this subject.

he who offends them may, by a moment's scorn, lose what hard work and brilliant abilities have deserved.

Butler, for all his interest—his delighted interest—in all forms of man's activity, could never lay full account with Philistia. But if he " messed a career " thereby, I am very certain that he made a fine business of life.

As a son, a brother, a husband, a father he was not only irreproachable : the word almost insults one who threw the service of his heart so eagerly into all these functions. As a man he walked in God's eye, consciously but fearlessly, and his courage was as ready at hand for disappointment and illness as for any sudden test on an Alpine peak.

I add what is, in my experience, one of the surest proofs of a complete man that he could open his lungs to the broadest human jest and laugh his soul utterly clean of it. At the point where good men are delicate his delicacy became almost girlish. I never knew one who with more easy an instinct separated the Holies from the Court of the Gentiles.

He never spoke of what he did for others in the way of charity and kindness. But I am assured that this was not little.

As a friend and companion he was unforgetable. You not only felt the silent inexhaustible fund of his good will: you were alongside a man whose talk, however jocund or seemingly trivial, always played close to the causes of things and of the things that really matter. Anecdote, quip, positive information—these indeed he did not despise, and I used to accuse him of teaching at least as gladly as he would learn; but he had the root of good converse which goes deeper than quip or anecdote or positive information. He caught up a subject with you and, in earnest or in play, hunted it like a true hound of dialectic, his laugh belling always on the right scent—the essence of its relation to life—as he followed in cry or picked it up after a check.

He loved his fellows, his books, and the flowers of the field. I have quoted the words carved on his tomb. My own inscription would be, *Here lies a scholar and a Christian gentleman.*

APPENDIX

DANTE AND THE RENAISSANCE

(Barlow Inaugural Lecture, delivered at University College, London, October 27, 1909)

We are apt to think and speak of Dante as the father of Italian poetry, and so far as chronology is concerned, the phrase may pass muster. But from the literary point of view, he closes, rather than opens a period. In his great poem, mediæval literature goes out gloriously, but he is distinctly a successor and not a forerunner. His work is inspired by mediæval theology, philosophy, science and art. His very diction is, to a great extent, that of the *dugentisti*, the prolific band of lyric poets who sprang up in Italy towards the middle of Frederick II's reign, and continued to the end of the century to pour out, from all parts of the peninsula, odes and sonnets, for the most part little more than echoes of the Provençal troubadours, but occasionally of rare beauty. Such longer poems as were written

during this period were chiefly of a didactic character, and may be left out of the reckoning. Of the heroic poem we hear, so far, nothing. Dante indeed seems, in a passage of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia,* to complain of its absence from Italian poetry. Love was practically the everlasting theme—the so-called courtly love as it had been known in the courts of Provence. The poems of the *Vita Nuova* really belong to the same school, though pitched in a sublimer key and inspired by a sincerity which we miss in most, though not all, of the older lyrics.

But Dante in truth had no successor, for we can hardly consider the geographical treatise of the excellent Fazio degli Uberti, the *Dittamondo* as he calls it, written though it be in the metre of the *Commedia,* and embodying many of its phrases, as belonging to the school of Dante. There is no school of Dante, there is no period of Dante ; he alone is his own period. There is contemporary poetry, but the stream of it flows round him as a river round an upstanding rock. Very little if any trace of his influence, very little similarity of thought or in manner, can be found the work of his contemporary and close friend, the lawyer poet, Cino of Pistoja, who, with his far-fetched conceits, and often laboured diction (for now and then, as in his famous ode addressed to Dante on the death of Beatrice, he could sing

sweetly enough), seems to form a link between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, preserving the weaker points of one, and anticipating those of the other. He is the real forerunner of Petrarch; and Petrarch it was who set the fashion for Italian lyric poetry. It is a curious thing, by the way, what a very small proportion Petrarch's vernacular work bears to his Latin writings. It was with the latter, not with the former, that he meant to make his bid for fame. His Latin is not the Latin which Dante wrote. Dante had read Cicero and Virgil, to say nothing of other classical authors; but it did not occur to him to try to write Latin like them. Even the playful eclogues which he wrote near the end of his life, though they have sometimes quite a Virgilian cadence, are by no means in the language Virgil wrote. As for prose, he wrote just the prose of St. Thomas Aquinas, the really living Latin of his own time, a useful and flexible language, but of a kind which would have made Cicero shudder. As for Greek, he practically had none; in fact, during his life there was in Western Europe none to be had. Before he was long dead, however, Greek manuscripts began to arrive in Italy, though it was many years before more than a very few persons acquired any knowledge of that language. Petrarch himself possessed a manuscript of Homer, but could not

read it. With Latin the case was somewhat different; the mediæval Latin continued to be used for many purposes, as all readers of Benvenuto's commentary on Dante will know. But people also began to read their classical authors with an eye for style, and in Petrarch's voluminous correspondence, doubtless written with a view to publication, we perceive a constant striving, sometimes fairly successful, to attain the Ciceronian model. The eye for style had a momentous influence on the course of Italian poetry, at any rate of lyric poetry. Henceforward we feel that the poet cares much less for what he says than for the way in which he says it, and consequently there is scarcely any Italian poetry after the *Commedia* which moves the reader with the true poetical ecstasy. We admire the form, we wonder at the art, but the matter leaves us unmoved.

Petrarch did once put himself into competition with Dante. The somewhat curious poem in *terza rima*, called *I Trionfi*, is obviously an attempt to meet Dante on his own ground. In spite of a fine passage here and there, the result is somewhat disastrous. The diction is polished, the lines flow smoothly enough, there is a great parade of classical and mythological learning, contrasting curiously with Dante's apposite introductions of such matters, but the whole thing bears to the *Commedia* very much the same

relation that the *Epic of Hades* bears to *Œnone* and *Ulysses;* and we cannot fail to mark here and there, a touch indicating that envy of Dante which even Petrarch's warmest admirers have to recognise. Petrarch, however, was a poet, and had the root of the matter in him, and *Spirto gentil* and the last twenty lines of *Trionfo della Morte,* or the exquisite ode *Vergine bella,* are enough to show that; and several other of the lyric poems can be picked out of a vast quantity of highly elaborated conceits which have something of the true poetic power. But his influence over Italian poetry was not propitious. Since him there have been many skilled versifiers in Italy but scarcely a poet; for I cannot accord the name of poet to the Petrarchists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Two men only, so far as I know, deserve this name; they form a curious juxtaposition: Lorenzo de' Medici and Michelangelo Buonarotti. Lorenzo, during his short life of forty-three years, was too busy, and too much occupied in the affairs of the world, to do more than indicate what he might have done if he had devoted himself to literature. But there are suggestions, in the body of verse he has left, of a true poetical instinct. Michelangelo was a kindred spirit with Dante. Both were "dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love." Michelangelo's poetic

work is even less in quantity than Lorenzo's. It is often rugged and harsh, but it has a red-hot core of poetry.

But we must return to Dante. At what rate was he esteemed by the polished writers of the Renaissance, when the Italian language, almost neglected during the greater part of the fifteenth century, came by its own again in literature? In passing, let me remark that I dislike this word Renaissance particularly. It would probably surprise many of my readers to learn how extremely modern it is, at all events in the wide and somewhat vague sense which is now-a-days assigned to it. The *New English Dictionary* has not yet reached it, and may not for some years to come, so I speak under correction. But I am pretty sure that you will not find it in Hallam, nor in a still later work dealing specially with the most brilliant portion of the period generally embraced under the name, Dennistoun's *Dukes of Urbino*. In its original sense, I believe it was applied chiefly, if not entirely, to the revival of classical architecture. Now it seems to carry with it the notion of a period of general enlightenment, of an age in which the finest pictures the world has ever seen were painted, and sculpture and the minor arts flourished exceedingly under princely patronage; of a liberation of the human spirit from the bonds of mediæval and scholastic

thought; of a splendid and happy time when men could say and do as they pleased, when killing was no murder, when *virtù*, efficiency, more especially in crime, earned the highest honour; an age whose chief glory was Cæsar Borgia, and its prophet Machiavelli. There was of course, so far as literature went, another side, a side of elegant manners, where virtue, not *virtù*, was the subject of polite discussion. There was the *Cortegiano;* but it must be remembered that several of the interlocutors in that charming work were men of anything but charming moral character, though the author, so far as is known, was blameless. But though the *Cortegiano* was admired, the *Prince* was the manual of conduct. How was an age like this likely to appreciate Dante? Of its men of action, there are very few for whom he would not have found appropriate quarters in some part of Malebolge. If they had read him, which probably few of them did, they would have found little that was in any way congenial. But it is the men of letters with whom we are chiefly concerned: how did *they* look at him? Well, some of them, notably Landino, whose commentary was first published in Florence in 1481, wrote voluminous notes, far exceeding the text in bulk, and mainly serving to show their own erudition, and that they understood Dante less than the fourteenth

century commentators had done. Others, like Pierfrancesco Giambullari and Giovanbattista Gelli, read lectures before the newly established Florentine Academy on detached passages of the *Commedia*. Both these excellent men and others undoubtedly loved Dante after their fashion; Gelli is full of him. But we see that what they really liked was to trace out the topography of the poem, or to take two or three lines of Dante as the text for a philosophical sermon. It was with their heads, not their hearts, that they appreciated him. Signor Michele Barbi, in a learned and interesting work, *Della Fortuna di Dante nel secolo XVI*, has attempted from these and other instances to show that Dante still stood high in general reputation during the so-called Renaissance. As a further corroboration of his view, he quotes a very curious passage from the *Orlandino*, a ribald burlesque of that erratic genius, Theophilo Folengo, of which (so curious is it) I may venture to quote a few lines. Incidentally it may be remarked that the opening passage shows how thoroughly, amid all his buffooneries, Folengo had grasped the true principle of poetic criticism.

> Ciò, dico, perchè officio è del Poeta
> Giovar e dilettar con tal maniera
> Distile, che 'l Lettore non s' attedia;
> E ciò fa Dante nella sua Comedia.

Quel Dante sai? Lo qual *Omer Toscano*
Appellar deggio sempre; come ancora
Virgilio e detto *Omero Mantovano*
Perqui la Patria mia tanto si onora;
E chi il Petrarca fa di lui soprano,
Nel arte mattematica lavora;
Che Dante vola più alto; e questo dico
Col testimonio di Giovanni Pico.

The next stanza quotes Pico as comparing Dante with the fruit, and Petrarch with the flower, adding that the style of the one must yield to the "vasta e orenda mole" of a lofty genius, capable of spreading its wings beyond the eighth circle of the Heavens. He continues that, by so far as *kyriæ* of Josquin surpasses the madrigals of Tamburino,

Così parmi che Dante alto e divino
Si lasci appo le spalle gli altrui Canti;
Chè quanto più dell' opre val la fede,
A Beatrice tanto Laura cede.

The last couplet, I would observe in passing, is a specially audacious reference, which, twenty years later or so, even Folengo would hardly have dared to venture.

But I think it may safely be said, that at that time there would have been found more people in Italy to set Faith above Works, than Beatrice above Laura. Folengo was an exception all round. When we come to the acknowledged arbiters of literature we find the great

Bembo—who, originally a Latinist, had in after years done more than any man to restore the vernacular language to its proper place—we find him, while recognising Dante, treating Petrarch as the model. Nay, if we may believe Sperone Speroni, Bembo used to tell him that Dante might be neglected ("è nulla"). But Sperone was a very old man when he wrote this, and Bembo had been more than thirty years dead; so we may hope, if we like, that there was some little lapse of memory: and indeed, if Bembo did say something of the sort, he may have been referring rather to style and diction than to intrinsic poetical merit; if, that is, he was capable of distinguishing the two things. Sperone himself, in a letter to the Admirable Crichton, written nearly thirty years earlier than that last quoted, has the grace to say that "Dante is no less an honour to our language, than Homer to Greek, or Virgil to Latin." But Sperone himself, if I mistake not, was quite capable of criticising him for uncouthness of diction. In spite of S. Barbi's special pleading, based on a few great names in literature, and the proceedings of the Florentine Academy, I venture to think that the real estimate of Dante formed by the general reader of the Cinquecento, is better illustrated by references to its general literature. For one thing, the greatest of Italian publishers, Gabriel Giolito

of Venice, during his long career covering almost exactly the middle third of the sixteenth century, while producing editions by the score of Petrarch, Boccaccio and Ariosto, printed Dante just once. It is a very pretty little edition, printed in 1555, and is interesting as being the first in which the epithet *Divina* is applied to the *Commedia*. This fact is somewhat significant. Men of that age are never tired of calling Dante the Divine Poet; but for one copy of the *Commedia*, they buy twenty or thirty of Petrarch.

In Dante's own city of Florence, where the learned men of whom I have spoken were so assiduously engaged in the exposition and amplification of minute fragments of his work, not a single edition seems to have appeared between the Giustine of 1506 and the Cruscan of 1595. Venice no doubt did somewhat better, but even there the Dantes bear a small proportion to the total of the books turned out by the great home of Italian printing.

Only the other day I came across what seems to be an even more striking piece of evidence. In 1545 a young man of letters, Giuseppe Betussi, published a treatise in the popular form of a dialogue, on the nature of love. Two friends, Raverta and Domenichi, are calling on a Venetian lady named Barba. The conversation at once turns upon that favourite, not to say for those

days inevitable subject; and it is pursued through many windings with much store of anecdote and quotation, apparently through the whole afternoon. Petrarch is often cited, Dante not quite so often, but enough to show that the author had a fair knowledge of him. Towards the end of the conversation they digress into the question of visions and dreams. Domenichi refers to *Inferno* xxxiii, where Ugolino speaks of a horrible vision that he had had, and quotes the three lines in which his children implore him to eat their flesh. The lady interrupts, "What was his dream?" Now she is represented as a thoroughly cultivated person who can refer to Tibullus and Virgil, and knows something of ancient history; but it is quite clear she had not heard of Count Ugolino. Elsewhere in the dialogue, in reply to some request of hers for argument or information, Domenichi begins his reply by playfully quoting the two opening lines of Arno d'Agnel's Provençal speech at the end of *Purg.* xxvi. "For Heaven's sake," says the lady, "talk to me in some Christian language." The dialogue is highly dramatic, the character of the speakers is well maintained, and we can hardly doubt that it gives a pretty faithful picture of the style of conversation among the cultivated class in Venice. Barba is, as has been said, anything but an illiterate woman; and in those days, as we see for instance

from the *Cortegiano*, women could hold their own with men, both in reading and, as Bacon would say, "conference," yet she does not know the most famous passage in the *Inferno*, nor one of the most striking in the *Purgatory*.

But, after all, for the most convincing proof of the comparative eclipse of Dante's reputation in that age, we need only turn to its literature. In lyric poetry, Petrarch is everywhere, Dante nowhere. He is out of the current altogether. Of course, a detached phrase may here and there be found, but even these more frequently in the semi-burlesque epic than in the sonnet or the ode. His very metre, the stately *terza rima*, is either employed for graceful idylls by Lorenzo, or for satire by Ariosto and others, or debased to the purposes of the so-called *capitoli*, burlesque at the best, and often unspeakably foul, in the hands of such writers as Berni, Dellacasa, Molza, Aretino.

Passing to the greater poems produced after the revival of Italian literature, we are more than ever struck by the complete opposition of the spirit which pervades them to that which inspires the *Commedia*. The greatest of these is, of course, the *Orlando Furioso*, and it is, in its own line, a very great work. Ariosto was by no means a loose liver; he was frugal, sober, and in his general life quite as respectable as any of

his contemporaries. He worked hard, and at one period of his life did some good public service. But one may read the *Furioso* from end to end without coming on anything calculated to arouse in any reader the nobler emotions which, as Dante saw, must lie at the base of all poetry truly deserving the name. You will remember the passage in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (II. 2) in which he says that themes for the highest poetry are threefold—valour, the kindling of love, and the right direction of the will. Modernising his language slightly, we may express his meaning by defining poetry as *the embodiment in dignified language and metrical form of the nobler emotions—so expressed as to give delight to the hearer and arouse the corresponding emotions in him.* Where in the *Furioso* do we find any of this? The Paladins with their Hippogriphs, their enchanted swords, their magic rings, are entertaining enough: but can we take them seriously? Can we suppose that their creator took them seriously? As for their loves, the less said about them, perhaps, the better. There is not much chivalry in Ruggiero's behaviour towards Angelica, and that, too, just after he has delivered her from the Orc. Now Ruggiero is perhaps the pattern man of the whole poem, and his affection for Bradamante comes, on the whole, nearest to what Dante would have understood by love. Once or twice we cannot

but suspect Ariosto of an intention to banter Dante. At any rate, such an episode as that of Lydia, in the thirty-fourth canto, suggests that he would have meted out a very different judgment to Francesca from that allotted to her by his stern predecessor.

This lack of appreciation in Italy, one may mention in passing, seems not to have been without its effect on our own literature. The English poets of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were, as every one knows, largely indebted to Italian models. But Dante was not among these. From Chaucer to Milton even the indefatigable industry of Dr. Toynbee has been scarce sufficient to detect more than two or three stray lines here and there which may possibly indicate that their writers had looked into the *Commedia*. Even in the case of Spenser, the parallel passages which he adduces seem to me, in every case where I have tested them, to resolve themselves into the merest poetic commonplaces. In one or two, indeed, I can trace no resemblance whatever. Even the incident of the bleeding bough in *Faery Queen*, Book I, C. 2, seems to resemble more closely the passage in III *Æneid*, whence Dante borrowed it, than Dante's own description in *Purgatory* xiv. There is nothing to show that Shakespeare had ever heard of Dante ; and, what is perhaps more curious, even

that thorough Italianist, Samuel Daniel, who knew his Tasso well enough, seems to have yielded nothing to Dr. Toynbee's researches. Perhaps the most curious and significant fact of all—I give it again on the authority of Dr. Toynbee—is that John Florio, in the first edition (1598) of his famous dictionary, does not include Dante in the "Catalog of books that I have read through of purpose for the accomplishing of this Dictionary"; yet by other evidence we know that Florio had at least read Dante, and in his second edition, thirteen years later, he gives some, though few, references to him.

Milton was no doubt steeped in Dante, but Milton was independent of poetic fashion, and his spirit was so much akin to Dante's that it would have been strange if he had failed to study him. But generally it may be said that so long as Dante was neglected in Italy, he was unknown in England.

We may take it, then, I think, that in spite of the Academic recognition of Dante in the sixteenth century, there was no general study or appreciation of his work. The causes of this do not seem to me very far to seek. His whole outlook on life was profoundly different from that which prevailed among the cultivated people of that period. He believed in this world as a place of training for another and higher world,

where every man would receive the due reward of his deeds. Hence the dominant note in his character is a stern austerity underlain by a profound tenderness. "He loved well because he hated, hated wickedness that hinders loving." Now I think we may say that neither austerity nor tenderness is what we expect to find in the most notable works of Italian literature. Of sensuality and mockery there is plenty, and nowhere more than in the work of the Cinquecento. I do not mean to say that friendship and kindly feelings were unknown among the men of that age. The numerous letters that they have left to us afford plenty of instances. Still less would I imply that there were not men who led perfectly decorous lives, good husbands and fathers, men who were possibly as good Christians as Dante himself, men who prayed and fasted as the Church bade them, and generally followed its ordinances. But these were not the men who rose to distinction, or whose names have come down to us. For the most part they confine their opinions to their own thoughts. To rebuke wickedness in high places, or, for the matter of that, in low places, was no part of their business. The fate of Savonarola was enough to show what would happen to them if they did. Dante could appreciate beauty and art as well as any of the cultivated gentlemen who graced the courts of

Urbino and Ferrara, possibly even better. He had a keener eye for all that is lovely in nature. But for him the beauty of this earth was not an end in itself; he valued it in so far as it was part of "the glory of Him who moves all things, which penetrates the universe, shining more in one place and less in another." Art for art's sake would not have been a maxim that appealed to him.

To make the matter clearer than I can do in my halting sentences, let me read a few words, written half a century ago by one of the greatest masters of English whom the last half century has seen; I mean the late Dr. Church, Dean of St. Paul's. I hope that at least some of those who read this know his essay on Dante, unrivalled by any study of the *Commedia* that to my knowledge has ever been produced in any language. I have quoted the passage before now, but in a volume which is out of print, so I perhaps may be excused for refreshing your memory. "Those who know the *Divina Commedia* best . . . know its austere, yet subduing beauty; they know what force there is, in its free and earnest and solemn verse, to strengthen, to tranquillise, to console. . . .

"But besides this, they know how often its seriousness has put to shame their trifling, its magnanimity their faint-heartedness, its living energy their indolence, its stern and sad grandeur rebuked low thoughts, its thrilling tenderness

overcome sullenness and assuaged distress, its strong faith quelled despair and smoothed perplexity, its vast grasp imparted the sense of harmony to the view of clashing truths. They know how often they have found, in times of trouble, if not light, at least that deep sense of reality, permanent though unseen, which is more than light can always give—in the view which it has suggested to them of the judgments and the love of God." Such is the lore to be learnt from the *Commedia*. Will any one say that the men of the Renaissance had any use for it?

Politically, again, the condition of Italy in the sixteenth century would have been thoroughly distasteful to Dante. Bred as a Guelph, that is, as a member of what one may call the Separatist party, the party, that is, which desired to keep Italy a group of small city states, torn by factions and constantly at war with each other, he learnt by experience how impossible this system would be if Italy was to remain prosperous. Even in his own day he saw the cities of Italy full of tyrants, and he must have foreseen that this would have been the inevitable result for them all. He ultimately—though, as he says, he formed a party by himself—came round to the view associated with the Ghibellines, that internal union as part of one great imperial system was his country's best road to the strength

which comes of quietness. His dream was magnificent but impracticable. Italy remained, indeed, in theory a portion of the empire. Its duchies and marquisates were in theory imperial fiefs. Between 1300 and 1440 five emperors were crowned at Rome, but the first of these had to fight his way thither, and the rest, unless we except Louis the Bavarian, exercised very little influence over Italian affairs. The imperial cause was practically lost before Dante had finished writing the *De Monarchia*. Italy itself, a prey alternately to France and Spain, remained a geographical expression down to our own days. The literary and artistic people of the Renaissance did not probably trouble themselves more about Guelph or Ghibelline than about anything to come after the present life, even when they saw Rome sacked by the imperial armies. Provided that they could win the favour of a prince by flattery couched in polished verse, by skill of hand or splendour of design—for, like the Cyrenaic philosopher in Horace, they held that to have pleased princes is no small praise—they were content so long as they escaped the dagger of some rival in letters or in love.

French and Spanish armies contended on Italian soil. The Pope sided with one or the other, and sometimes led his own forces into the field. The various states took various parts, now

with one, now with the other, and joined in the fray. But, save for a few scanty allusions, we should know very little of this from the literature of the time. Italy produced no Tyrtæus. If Dante's great ideal of a universal monarchy with an emperor at its head to whom all sovereigns would be vassals, under whom all men might live at peace, who should be arbiter in all temporal things as the Pope was in spiritual—if this ideal did not occur to them, they were hardly to be blamed. Maximilian was probably the last emperor who might have dreamt of anything of the kind. Even Charles, though a far more powerful prince than his grandfather, acted merely as one of several rival sovereigns, and though after him traces may be found of a feeling that the emperor enjoyed a special dignity, he was never, as a matter of fact, in a position to assert it.

When the *De Monarchia* was first printed, in 1559, it was printed in Germany, and in Italy was promptly put on the Index. The *Commedia* never quite shared that fate, though for a long time, whenever the Inquisition got hold of a copy, whether manuscript or printed, certain passages were carefully blocked out.

It is clear, then, that between the mind of Dante and the mind of the Renaissance, there could be no sympathy. Perhaps I may add,

though with some trepidation, that I doubt whether, in spite of the enormous labour bestowed on his work by modern Italian scholars, in spite of the endless discussions on various points, even the most minute, which are ever pouring forth from the presses of Italy, the conditions are really much improved. Manuscripts are ransacked, texts are revised, notes almost as voluminous as Landino's are written; but it is rarely that we come across any appreciation, such as that left by the distinguished man whom I have quoted above, of what it is that constitutes Dante's real greatness. The modern Italian may still call Dante the Divine Poet, but, unless I am much mistaken, his real poetic divinity is rather Leopardi.

But to return for one moment, in conclusion, to our general theme, Which was, after all, the free man—Dante wandering about in exile and poverty, and hurling his fierce invective at Popes and Potentates, fearlessly admonishing the mighty ones of the earth; or Petrarch paying his court to the tyrants of Padua and Milan—to the latter in such a manner as to call forth remonstrances even from his easy-going friend Boccaccio, and disapproval from his admiring biographer Mr. Hollway-Calthorpe; or Ariosto finding no taste of bitter in the bread doled out by a contemptuous patron, and going up and down a Pope's stairs for

even less reward; daring to pour his complaints into friendly ears only, and in half private letters, and reserving the work which was to gain him the ear of the world as the vehicle for fulsome flatteries of men whose measure he had taken as well as any? And what is true of Ariosto is true, in its degree, of all, or nearly all, the greatest men of letters of that time. A brief comparison like this will serve perhaps as well as anything else to show how widely Dante's scheme of life was separated from that which satisfied the men of the Renaissance.

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